

# Wheels & Floats

## September 2025

**Tauranga Model Marine and Engineering Club Inc.**

## TAURANGA MODEL MARINE AND ENGINEERING CLUB INC.

The Secretary  
PO Box 15589  
Tauranga 3112

Miniature Railway Memorial Park  
Open to Public, weather permitting  
Sundays : 10am to 3pm approximately

Palmerville Station Phone 578 7293  
Bank Account 03-0435-0461711-000

Website: [www.tmmec.org.nz](http://www.tmmec.org.nz)  
Facebook: Memorial Park Railway Tauranga

### MEETINGS

General Members Meeting every first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.  
Committee Meeting every second Thursday of the month at 7pm.  
Maintenance Tuesday mornings from 9am.  
Engineering discussions Tuesday evenings 7.00pm.

### COMMITTEE

President: Warren Karlsson 027 5422863  
Vice President: Owen Bennett  
Club Captain Ethan Bramley 022 0972 767  
Secretary: Warren Karlsson 027 5422863  
Treasurer: Jerry Payne 021 486 013  
Committee: Ian Bain, Ethan Bramley,  
Graeme Hanley, David Ingley  
Brian Marriner,, Russell Prout

### CONVENERS

Boiler Committee: Owen Bennett, Ross Campbell, Bruce McKerras, Ash Thomas.

Safety Committee:

Ethan Bramley, David Ingley,  
Warren Karlsson, Bruce  
McKerras,

Workshop: Ethan Bramley

Drivers Licencing : Warren Karlsson, Bruce  
McKerras,

Track: Russell Prout, Ash Thomas

Librarian: Chris Pattison

Rolling Stock: Jason Flannery

Trach Managers : Ash Thomas, Russell Prout

Website: Peter Davies

MEANZ rep Russell Prout

Editor: Roy Robinson 027 5491182  
[royrobkk@gmail.com](mailto:royrobkk@gmail.com)

# PRECISION WORKZ ENGINEERING

**Cover photo :** Bruce Mcs' 1952 Bristol 401, now after several years of reassembling and restoration it only has the upholstery and some fine tuning to complete.

## Presidents Report September 2025

A busy month with two working bees held to progress the Raised Track realignment and the completion of the replacement of the lower bridge decking, which incidentally is looking very smart! The old decking timbers have served us well for around 3 decades and are now being given a second life as raised garden edging, as spotted by two quick members of the passing public – does that mean we have some claim on Carbon Credits? Purposeful recycling and all that!



We are planning to hold another two consecutive Saturdays for a second round of working bees on the 20<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of this month, come along there's plenty to do to complete before our November Open weekend.

One item of note is that the Turntable/Hoist under frame is in desperate need of attention to stop the hidden rust.

Although the weather was marginal for the last two working bees, we managed a good 6 hours of constructive effort on both occasions, it also affected the last three Sunday in August with an unprecedented three consecutive weekends with no public passenger running including cancelling the Members Play Day.

Goods news in that TAMAR is back running and performing well, and is planned to be “out ‘n about” every second Sunday, the other locomotives Black Magic and both Electric's are earning their keep, and trusty old No.4 keeps on keeping on!

The workshop remains cluttered and I have had plans drawn up for some “modernisation”, your comments please so we can progress.

Looking up in the roof space, DON'T! .....it's rather congested – I did see some off-cuts of “Astro Turf” stored upstairs, possibly a well-intentioned gift, but will it ever be put to use?

I think we need to work on this area as well and discover items that need to be moved on so we can regain access and keep only necessary inventory.

Donated items are great but please let the Committee know if you are donating so we can ascertain their place and relevance to the club – worn out old tools that don't work for you will have a similar fate.

Generally donated items are welcome and then on a first-in-first served bases distributed out to club members giving them another life

Our submission and feedback to the Council have been acknowledged, so watch this space...space...space!

Hopefully our long term lease will be reinstated.

However the Council did respond to three notified maintenance issues with the large Casuarina tree again losing another limb, the access road was “partially re-metaled” and the concrete slabs near the steaming bay had their exposed edges ground down. It also appears that an earlier complaint regarding the “rough sleepers”, fouling the area around the club house has seen this problem “disappear”, with the Police and the Council making regular patrols and visits to the Park.

I use the Council app. "Antenno" for notifications and it seems an effective means of communication. This app. works with every Council in NZ as long as you are a ratepayer you will be connected to your own local Council through this mobile application.

It was noted that the raised track deviation around the "Tree" between tunnels 2 and 3 is again affecting the ground level track. Obviously the "Tree" is not going to move so maybe a possibly that we need to consider deviating the mainline between the two existing tunnels , with a new section to re-join the track , through a new cutting or better still a new tunnel which would solve our rolling stock storage problems. The only constraint here is that we NEED to sign a long term lease with the Council so as to progress any major works.

By the time the next newsletter comes out we will have completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term School Holidays, Daylight Saving would have taken effect, two more working bees would have been completed, the garden at home would have taken over by weeds and hopefully the weather had settled to allow for our regular Member's Play Day as we drift into October!

Again there is still one position vacant on the Committee if you feel a desire to help guide the club along for the next 7 months, before our next AGM.

A big thank you to both Roy and Barbra for again volunteering to cater for the Open Weekend - a good keen team with an impressive "track" record over many years of ensuring the inner person has no grumbles!

We also have our Duty Operator for both Halloween and the Open Weekend Saturday sorted – thank you Jason for stepping forward.

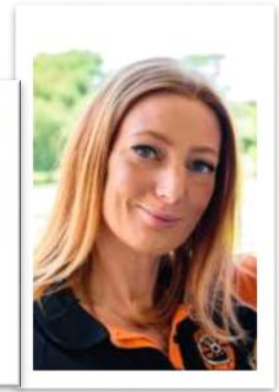
Again thank you for your attention and regards to you all,

**Warren Karlsson**

The logo for First Credit Union features the word "first" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "i" is highlighted in yellow, while the other letters are white. Below "first" is the phrase "credit union" in a smaller, white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a solid teal background.The logo for Metalcraft Roofing consists of a stylized black silhouette of a person with their arms raised, positioned to the left of the company name. The word "Metalcraft" is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, and the word "Roofing" is written below it in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

# Club Captain's Report for September

On the railway side of the club, we have had a run of bad weather affecting us over the past month. Rain has meant no public running for 3 consecutive weeks, a total of 8 weekends affected by the weather this year so far. We did manage to run for Father's Day and the free rides for Dads went down well, it was a cold day though and not as many people as usual were braving



the park. However, we did get a visit from the new owners of Hells Pizza who brought us some free food, always a bonus!

We have two big events coming up for the club shortly, the first being our **Halloween Night Run** on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October and the second our **Annual Open Weekend**.

**Halloween** is perhaps our most popular run of the year and attracts big numbers of riding public. If you are available to help out, it would be greatly appreciated. It is always a fun night with the track decorated and lots of different costumes. We seem to up the game each year with the decorations for the track, hoping to carry on that tradition this year.

Our **Open Weekend** is the weekend of Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November. We will be sending out invites to other clubs and promoting the event via Facebook. Hopefully we will be able to attract fellow model engineers and public alike and make the weekend a big event for the club. It is a great opportunity to show all the different sides to our club and promote the talents of our members. We are also hoping to have all the new modifications for the raised track officially opened allowing us to host a greater variety of engines/locos. A big thank you to all those involved in this project, a lot of great work has gone in there.

## Special Runs

We have two special runs booked in on separate Tuesdays over the next 4 weeks, one is a special needs group. Warren K will be sending out further information about this if anyone is available to help.

## School Holiday Running

There has been a proposal put forward for running one day a week (Thursday) during the next school holidays, if the weather is playing ball and there are sufficient volunteers to run. Again, there will be communication via email from Warren K with further details.

## Social Events

We are still looking at trying to organise a bowling night for those who would like to come along. Apologies, I have not got very far with this just yet, I got struck down with flu and a chest infection which put me out of action over the last few weeks. I will try and sort out a date for the first half of December.

## Workshop

Just a reminder: please keep the workshop clean and tidy. When you finish using tools and equipment, return them to their proper places so everything stays organised. Remember to clean up after yourself. A new workshop layout plan has also been proposed to create a more open environment.

**Joanne & Ethan**

## Humour :

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher told her that it was practically impossible for a whale to swallow an entire human being because even though it's a very large mammal, its throat was very small.

The little girl stated that her friend Bubble was swallowed by a whale.

Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was a physical impossibility.

The little girl said, "When I will go to heaven, I will ask Bubble about this."

The teacher said, fuming, "What if Bubble went to hell?"

The little girl replied, "**Then you ask her.**"



# WELD DEPOT

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**OPEN!**  
Saturday 9am - 3pm  
Monday to Friday  
8am - 3pm

Help.....

I wish to thank Jeff Hallam for his 4 part article which I ran over the last 4 months. Jeff along with others who provide articles go toward making the Club mag an interesting, must read, publication which I try to ensure it is. The bottom line is no articles, no mag, Just remember, I only assemble the bit and pieces into each months mag, soooooooooooooo I need your input of articles to keep the what I believe is an interesting publication. I don't accept the excuse, "I'm not good at writing, my spelling is not great," I can beat you article into shape and you and I will be the only ones who will know that I have "played" with your article.

**MORE ARTICLES PLEASE !!!!!!!!!**

**Ed Roy**



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**MITRE 10**

# Mining Venture at Neavesville

Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 19, June 1975

By The Late E.D. HAVILL (Bill)

It was "depression" time but we were young and determined to make our own way rather than join the ranks of the "unemployed". Moreover, being full of optimism and the spirit of adventure we made secret preparations and decided to disappear quietly -- destination unknown! So at the end of a typically beautiful March day, shortly after the Napier Earthquake, my mate and I left Matatoki after working on Mr Peter Clarke's farm. The evening had darkened but was fine and cool when we headed south carrying all our worldly possessions including: one 12lb sack of flour, 1lb Dripping, Baking Powder, Half Axe, frying pan, Tobacco, Matches, Tea, Sugar and a good billy and blanket each. After an hour we came to Puriri and soon decided to leave the rough metal of the main road, so turned left, unaware that we were taking the trail over the Range, via Neavesville, Puketui, and the old Golden Hills and Broken Hills mines, thence to Hikuai and Tairua.

Our first night was spent on the side of the road after making a hurried camp and boiling the billy. In the morning we breakfasted on flapjacks washed down with plenty of sweet black tea. Once again we set off slowly climbing higher into the hills. We passed a pair of peaks known as The Pinnacles, but sometimes referred to as "Little London". They rose very sharply from a large basin, and it seemed to be miles around the Pinnacles until we passed beyond them, leaving them below us. The road kept rising, and we felt that we were going around in circles. We passed a couple of farms on the left, then came out on a portion of country almost devoid of growth, with a sheer drop of hundreds of feet into the bush below. This revealed a breath taking view of the Thames Valley - Hauraki Plains area. At this stage we were some two thousand feet above sea level. Taking our fill of the glorious view we made our way slowly further along the track. This section was blasted out of the sheer solid rock. At last we found another likely camp spot with handy water and firewood. After another meal of tea and flapjacks, (something which I was later to become expert at making) we relaxed round the campfire, each with full stomach and a good cigarette. We considered ourselves masters of our own destiny.

We were up and on the move early, after our usual breakfast. It was now downgrade, and this heartened us considerably. Then came a mile section of old corduroy track, probably well trodden by bullock teams in the past. Next we found an old kauri driving dam just past the spot where the KiriKiri track branched off. We learned later that this area was known as Measletown, but could never fathom how that name came about. Descending more steeply now, we rounded bend after bend, and overlooked more open country with glimpses of distant Tairua and Hikuai. A few more bends, and there below us lay Neavesville in a glorious panorama of bush, bounded by Tairua with Mayor Island beyond.

We noted several bush shanties made of kauri palings grouped around the hotel, the huts having the big wide chimneys of corrugated iron typical of most bush shanties. Walking down the last ridge we approached the hotel through a wide gate across the road. It had a squarish ground floor, walls partly covered in corrugated iron, uncovered verandah, and none of it painted. There was also a smaller shed which on closer inspection proved to be a Post Office. After making inquiries at the hotel we were told that there was an empty hut a little past, and to the rear of the hotel. We sallied forth and were soon installed there. We had thoroughly enjoyed every minute of our time out in the bush over the past couple of days, but the thought of having a roof over our heads was rather attractive. The beds were only sacks nailed over pieces of four by two, but much softer than the bare ground. We found that our new home had a gauze covered safe in which to keep our food, (the other huts also had this small luxury) and somehow it gave us a sense of security, the feeling of having a home to ourselves.

After a while we went to the hotel to meet some of the community, which amounted to about a dozen people. The hotel proprietor was Jim Steele; his wife was a sturdy motherly type with a trace of dark blood. We learned that the packhorses went down to Puriri once a week, and brought back two five gallon kegs of beer, meat and whatever provisions were needed, as well as mail.

In 1925 there had been a huge fire, which left the ground fairly well cleared with patches of good grass scattered amongst the burnt stumps. Most of the inhabitants eked out an existence by digging gum principally on a large burnt out area, part of it swampy, known as Mullocky Flat. A good spade such as a No. 1 Skelton was recommended for digging, with the addition of a gum spear for the more experienced hands. The latter was a long thin rod, sharpened on the end, with a ferule a little up from the tip. The spears could be anything from three feet long, up to six feet long for deep gum. The delicate sense of touch and the dexterity of some of the old hands was an everlasting wonder to us novices. The usual method of digging gum was known as paddocking, which was done by holding the spade in front, blade facing you, then digging with a chopping motion, and dragging the dirt toward your feet. Where ever we went there were signs of gum digging by this method. We made a start at digging for ourselves, and though our first efforts were not very productive, we soon learned to look for more likely spots, but my mate soon tired of the rough life, having previously been a ship's steward. The call of the sea was too great, and after about two weeks he went back down the track to civilisation.

I then joined forces with another solitary digger, who introduced me to the "Nut Bag", which was a sugar bag strung around the waist on a short piece of rope. The nut bag was for putting the pieces of gum in as they were won from the soil. My new mate, Bert Smith, had a much better camp, with the inside of the hut lined with tenting, making a very snug and warm home.

He also had different sized camp ovens, used for making bread, cooking appetizing stews, roasts, and even making pastry. By now I had become quite used to the higher altitude with its lighter atmosphere and colder nights. Three more travellers arrived to swell our numbers, Mr Harry Morgan, who was an old ex-miner from Waitekauri, his son Steve, and nephew Harry Briffiths [**possibly Griffiths – E**] from Turua. Harry remained a close friend until his death in 1952.

The Puriri Hotel was managed by Mr Martin Grace, one of several brothers from Waitekauri. The owner, Mrs Pearson, and her son Norman being in England for a period of about eighteen months visiting relatives. After a month or two when the Steeles left Neavesville, Mr and Mrs Joe Sokilich came to take over the hotel on behalf of Martin Grace. Joe had with him a button accordion [**accordion – E**] and was a versatile performer, while Harry Morgan and I could knock out a good few tunes, so we had some rollicking sing songs up in the old pub during the evenings. The hotel had a large kitchen equipped with a Dutch oven, a bathroom, eight single rooms, a very large dining room, and a small commercial room which had an American style stove in it, with the chimney going right up through the ceiling. This was very good for heating the room. The public bar had a large slab of kauri as the counter, being about two feet wide, and twelve feet long. The custom was not enough to keep the public bar open, and most of the drink was served through a small slide panel opening into the passage that ran the length of the hotel, and was just across from the commercial room. During the Winter months we used to come here to get warmth from the stove.

Two families of Maori gum climbers (Barlow and Dick) joined us for awhile. They made their living by cutting the bark of the kauri trees and taking the gum that oozed out of the cuts. They had specially reinforced boots with spikes on the toes, also a pair of climbing hooks which were about ten inches long, and having a three inch spike bent at right angles from the end which was driven into the tree as they climbed. They worked their way up the trees by alternately kicking the toe spike into the bark, then taking their weight on the climbing hook. They gave us a demonstration of climbing on a big hollow kauri. Bushmen would fell only the very best of trees and many an old one enjoyed an extension of its life through being hollow.

The climber would carry a rope wound around his waist, and a short handled tomahawk. After reaching the head of the tree he would take a couple of wraps of the rope around a stout limb, and lower himself back down the side of the tree, sitting in a sort of loop seat already made in the end of the rope. He would chop small scarfs in the bark on the way down, and as far around the tree as he was able to reach using the climbing hooks and toe spikes to work his way around the side of the tree. They usually had to climb up the tree again to do the second side. This was a six monthly job, as it took that long for the "green gum" which flowed so profusely from the cuts to harden enough for it to be chipped off and gathered up into sacks.

At this time rescraped gum of good quality could fetch up to 2/- per pound, ordinary scraped gum up to 1/6d per pound, nuts (which were about an inch in diameter) sold for 1/- per pound, and last of all the dust which was the scrapings off the other grades mixed in with a bit of stray dirt was worth 2d a pound. Most of the gum was sold at Hikuai to T. Morrisson who was a store keeper and gum buyer. He would bring horses packed with supplies to sell or exchange for gum. A 56 lb bag of flour was about 12/6d, and we would soon cut out the value of the gum on flour, tinned milk, bully beef, & butter.

Following a spell of gum digging I shifted camp to go along with Jack Collins splitting Kauri fencing posts down by the Third Branch of the Tairua River. We were paid £4 per hundred for the posts by the Hikuai farmers. Then I became associated with Jack Collins Snr., who was trying to promote a mining venture. There were six members, each with a £50 holding, and the aim was to open up the old Golden Hills mine which was in the lower reaches of the Third Branch. With the aid of a surveyor brought down from Auckland the old mine pegs were located with the sightings being done from the Neavesville trig. I was then installed as caretaker and cook, with the promise of some shares in the undertaking, but alas, like many other mining ventures of that period funds ran out after a certain amount of preliminary work had been done. Most of the Syndicate members left, walking out to the nearest transport. The exception was Sydney Bridge, who stayed and settled on a farm down toward Hikuai, and is still there with his family.

I returned to Neavesville, somewhat disillusioned, and once more joined the small community. There was much evidence of the past mining activity at Neavesville, with the rusty stamp boxes and boilers lying near the burned out timbering of the battery in the middle of Mullocky Flat. The old Golden Belt seemed to have been a fairly big mine, with the cables of an aerial tramway lying on the hillsides leading down to the remains of a fairly large battery. This site is now right beside the Kopu Hikuai road. There was one battery standing complete in Neavesville, the story being that after being erected, the big suction gas engine which was to drive the battery would not operate at the high altitude (some 2,500 feet). There were ten head of stamps, hopper and jaw crusher, berdans, and Wilfrey [**Wilfley – E**] table, all set up, but had never crushed a single ton of rock. There was plenty of evidence that our predecessors had intended to work the battery, as they had cut and stacked many cords of mountain rata, a wood that had been in plentiful supply. A mixture of firewood, with a small amount of anthracite coal and coke was evidently the fuel necessary to run the plant.

Martin Grace, who was holding the mineral rights of the area, got together with his brother Perry, Harry Morgan, his son Len, and myself. We employed an out of work fellow who had spent a bit of time with engines, and after a lot of experimenting and hard work turning over the very large flywheel the engine gave a mighty kick and burst into life. Harry Morgan and I were immediately assigned to the job of getting ore. We knew where there was a fair amount broken out and paddocked, this being done before the mine was abandoned. However Perry Grace who was a great prospector and fossicker had meanwhile found a small ironstone leader that was carrying a few colours of gold. Harry and I followed it up the slope, across the tram-line, and into the high bank beside the tramline. We had already got a couple of tons of the paddocked stuff out to the hopper by means of the tramway conveniently left for us. By the third day we had managed to drive about five feet on the little leader. It was a coffee coloured strip about four inches across running down the face of the tunnel from the floor to the roof. The whole face was picking country, and we were able to break it down easily.

Our first day of crushing arrived, and the stamps were clanging away all morning. After lunch we tried a couple of handfuls of brown rubbly stuff in the dish, and were elated to find the bottom all covered in gold. We noticed that the stamps had stopped, so thinking that something might be wrong Harry and I made our way down to the battery. We found that they were having to lift the stamps every half hour to scrape the plates, and by the end of the afternoon the battery team had several balls of hard amalgam [**amalgam – E**]. Then came the processes of retorting the amalgum, and smelting the bullion. We had a small portable forge with the heat generated with a small hand turned blower. We took turns at operating this to get the temperature up enough for the smelting, having five minute spells, as the speed of turning had to be kept very high, and the heat did not help. We found it a good idea to have a tin shield to try to protect our hands.


Perry Grace was our Master of Ceremonies through the full day that it took to retort and smelt the bullion. After it had melted it was poured into moulds, making two beautiful 60 ounce bars.



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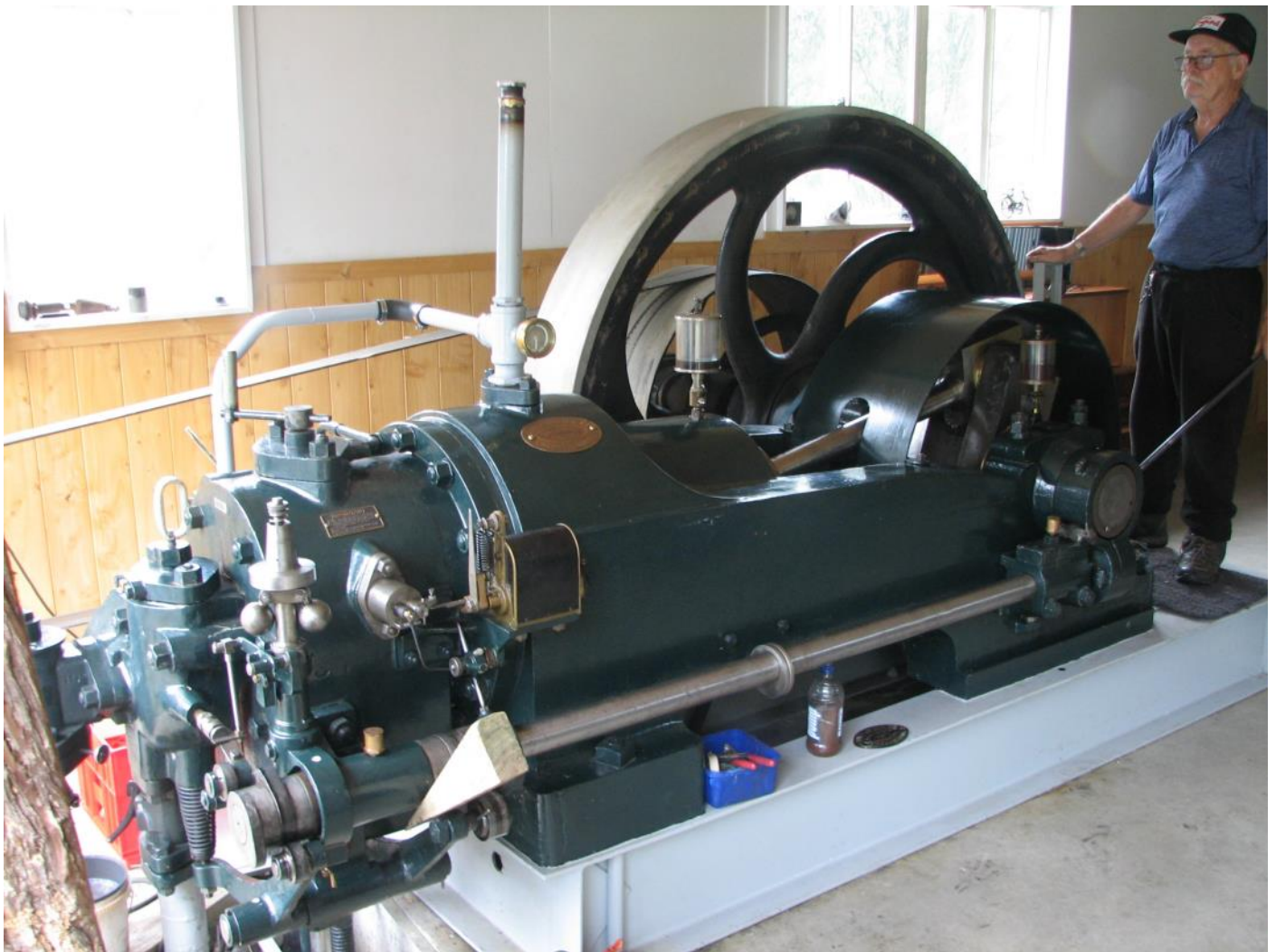
True, we were only paid £6 per ounce by the Bank because of the percentage of silver in the gold, but to our eyes in the middle of the Depression years this was a most heartening sight. We all had a wonderful sense of achievement, having participated in the project from start to finish, and for me personally there was great exhilaration because of the unexpected wealth gained from my one sixth share! We were to win more gold to the value of £2,000 until the mine was taken over by Jack McCoy of Auckland. Len and I stayed there, working on wages at £5 per week, along with several miners from the old Dubbo at Karangahake, who could also tell a tale of a brief period of mining at Neavesville.

You may well be forgiven in wondering just what this article has to do with Model Engineering and the answer is, nothing!!!!!! But the following pics may well help you build a picture of just what the battery was like and the engine which drove it. John Brown has restored this National Engine in Katikati and it sits in a purpose built shed. The pic below is of the wrecked engine still in place in the battery. The other is of the engine restored in Katikati.



### **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.



John spent many years rebuilding this engine with many parts having to be cast from home made patterns then machined to fit. If I remember correctly some 40kg of brass was cast into bearings etc. If you study the first pic you will notice that the bearing caps are missing, these were just 2 of the items John had to cast together with bearing shells to suit. It was a huge project and a real credit to John for his commitment to the project. That's John on the right. Ed

Credit to Ohinemuri Regional History Journal for the article.



## Show and Tell

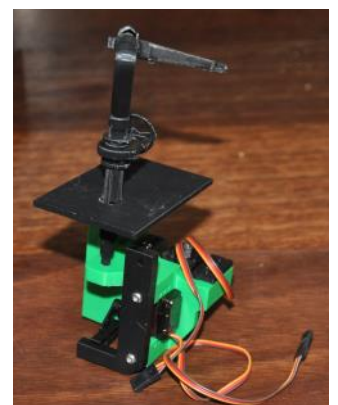


Above : Whilst Kerrin Galvin has been a member of our Club for some time he has only recently moved to Tauranga from New Plymouth so this was his first of hopefully many visits to our normal monthly meeting. Kerrin just happened to have (as you do) in the back of his car one of the two frames for his Garrett K 0-4-0 0-4-0 loco he has been building over many years. Kerrin's build story is no different to many of our own, interruptions, revisits, mistakes etc, you all know what I mean.



Russell P had a trip to Singapore and whilst there purchased some "toys" with the intention of using them in his tug. A water cooled inverter and a DC motor which has more torque than my ute! Just amazing the tech available today.

Also for his tug is the fire monitor which is completely operational with rotation and direction all controlled by a hand held remote.



## Working Bees 23-30th August.

Work on the hoist sub floor assembly has progressed well with successful trials of the rise and fall assembly in the pit opening and completion of fabrication of the surround and control system that allows the sub floor to raise and fill the pit hole as the hoist is raised and rotated.

Works also progressed on the raised track deviation project following the two recent working bee's. This work is mainly to avoid issues that a nearby trees roots have impacted the structure of the raised track foundation and consequently reduced ride car ground clearance.

The deviation will enable a section of the old raised track to feed a new steaming bay.

More working bees are required to enable this deviation to be in and working for our open weekend early in November. Russell P





# Duty Operator Roster

## TAURANGA MODEL MARINE and ENGINEERING CLUB INC. - DUTY OPERATORS ROSTER END 2025

	7th September 2025	Warren Karlsson	Father's Day
	14th September 2025	Ian Bain	
	21st September 2025	Ethan Bramley	
	28th September 2025	Bryan Fitzpatrick	Daylight Saving starts
Saturday	4th October 2025	tba	PLAY DAY
	5th October 2025	Warren Karlsson	
	12th October 2025	Warren Karlsson	
	19th October 2025	Joanne Knights	
	26th October 2025	Steve Mannington	Labour Day Monday 27th October
Friday	31st October 2025	Jason Flannery	Halloween Friday Night Run.
	2nd November 2025	Bruce McKerras	
Saturday	8th November 2025	Jason Flannery	Open Weekend
Sunday	9th November 2025	Russell Prout	Open Weekend
	16th November 2025	Stewart Walker	
	23rd November 2025	Ian Bain	
	30th November 2025	Bruce Bocock	
Saturday	6th December 2025	tba	PLAY DAY
	7th December 2025	Ethan Bramley	Holiday weekends
	14th December 2025	Bryan Fitzpatrick	tba = to be announced
	21st December 2025	Jason Flannery	To ensure cover, any changes to the roster are to be made directly between affected individual Operators.
	28th December 2025	No Run	



# Nostalgia

On the 25th March 1973 DA 1517 crashed into a slip at the Fordell Tunnel. Note who took these photos.

## Railwaymen toil to clear line

THE Taranaki line was blocked for four days after a New Plymouth-bound goods train was derailed when it struck a slip at the mouth of the Fordell Tunnel about 2am on September 20. The train, hauled by two Da class diesel electrics, ran into the slip a few feet from the tunnel portal. The leading locomotive smashed into the portal and both it and the second locomotive were derailed.

Sixteen of the 55 wagons on the train were also derailed and several were damaged beyond repair. The driver suffered slight injuries.

Clearing the line was delayed when the 40-ton Craven steam crane from Wellington toppled during lifting operations. Operations resumed with the arrival of a similar crane from Auckland and the line was re-opened at 9.25pm on September 23.

As is usual in such emergencies railway staff worked round the clock in cold and muddy conditions. The enormous difficulties involved in clearing the tangled wreckage in such a difficult site are graphically shown in these photographs taken by Mr Ian Welch of Stokes Valley.



Da 1517 smashed against the Fordell Tunnel portal after striking the slip. To the right of the photograph, half buried in sticky mud, is the second locomotive on the train, Da 1503. Both locomotives were extensively damaged.



An overall view of the scene of the derailment showing the Wellington steam crane working to clear the wagons jammed in the cutting leading to the tunnel portal. About four hours after this shot was taken the crane toppled over during clearing work.

Note : Pics taken by Ian Welch. Credit to NZ Rail magazine, December 1973.