

Northern Views

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Clubrooms/Running Track at Heritage Park, SH14, Maunu, Whangarei.

Website: wmec.org.nz

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THIRD SUNDAY RUNNING

Last month's "Third Sunday Running" was an absolute bonanza. The crowds were non-stop most of the day. We were lucky that there were quite a few members on duty because the day was probably the second most busiest that we have ever had.

The snag dispensary also did very well and sold out much earlier than it should have done.

Unfortunately our regular ticket-seller Gail, along with husband Colin, has moved north to Kerikeri and I believe that El Presidente Rodney was left to drive the ticket box ... and me — well I played hooky and had a drop of "Kulture". We, wife and I, went to a local production of the "The Last Night of the Proms". All in all a very good production. Whangarei sure has a wealth of talent for such a smaller area of the country, but really needs a larger theatre to cope with outside productions.

[I digress].

Refurbishing some of the older ride-cars is underway and these will be painted in the blue that has become the club colours and our name will be emblazoned in the middle of the side panels. Out-of-date advertising has been removed. Some ride-cars require new bogies. A General Meeting was held after the day's running. This is a new idea with hopes of boosting the attendances at meetings. This was well attended and several ideas discussed.



CLUB NOTICES

3rd Sunday Running — August 18, 2019, 10 am — 3 pm.

Mid-week Workdays — Mostly Every Wednesday, 10 am — 3 pm.

Extra Running Days This Month:

SEE PAGE THREE

THESE WORK IN WITH
MUSEUM "LIVE" DAYS AND OTHER
EVENTS WHEN HELD

QUIZ — What is it and where?

See Page 4.



WEDNESDAY WORKDAYS



Still a bit on the cold side and our track, situated where it is, is prone to most winds, especially from the south. And since we are also up high the aforementioned wind is inclined to be not so warm.

Early in the month we paid a visit to the farm machinery group that has its workshop, etc, on the Heritage Park site to partake of tea and cakes. The group put on a good spread and all their machinery was available for inspection. Their new display hall was excellent and I believe there is another storey to be added to the building. That being the case they will have quite an area for that purpose.

The basement boys are busy getting the material ready for some replacement track sets which we will try to install in the coming summer period. A small part of the present track hails from the old Tarewa Park site and is well past its use by date.

The school holidays were upon us during July and that entailed running a train or three for the public's pleasure on the Wednesday of each week. And yes, it pays quite well too.

Asi, since his "retirement" has really come back into the fold. As previously mentioned he has up-graded his loco [*Linus*] with new batteries and a bit of spit & polish and has been giving it a workout that it has not had in quite a while. He is at present building a ramp for the purpose of unloading *Linus* from his car to steam-up bay and visa versa — this is based on the ramp that the club uses.

Now that the school holidays are finished things are back to normal, work on readying new replacement sleepers has re-commenced. These sleepers have come from our stockpile that we acquired a few years back. After all the cutting, etc, the basement floor was given a bit of a clean-up and tidy-up of all things that seem to park themselves where they shouldn't be.

A start was made on water-blasting the fence around the steam-up bay. There was much moss and mould and flaking paint. Weather permitting, will be continued next week.

LIST OF MAIN CLUB OFFICERS

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Club Telephone: (09) 438 9520 (**Available Work and Running Days Only**).

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

Subscriptions of **\$10** for the coming financial year are now due and are valid until the end of July 2020.

These are payable at the clubrooms in cash or by Eftpos (we have one of those infernal machines), or by cheque and snail mail to: Whangarei Model Engineering Club, P.O. Box 10233, Te Mai, Whangarei 0134

\$10 ——— **CHEAPEST IN N.Z.** ——— **\$10**

EXTRA RUNNING DAY

An Extra Running Day will be held on Sunday, September 1

This is Barnado's / Father's Day annual event.

This annual event is quite popular, so we could be busy

ANSWER TO QUIZ ON PAGE TWO

World's first solar-powered train at Byron Bay, NSW, Australia.

A bird's-eye view of the station and train at Byron Bay in northern New South Wales. Cape Byron is the most easterly point of the Australian continent.

The view shows the mass of solar panels on both the train and the station roof so that in fact the whole complex is almost completely self-sufficient in electricity.

The two carriage rail set was constructed as the first of ten "600 class" sets at the Chullora Railway Workshops, Sydney, in 1949. From around 1942 – 1945 the Chullora Workshops were used to build Beaufort aircraft bombers during the Second World War. Following the war and with the massive influx of European immigrants, transporting people around the state was becoming critical. So the workshops innovatively used aluminium aircraft technology from their war efforts to produce high performance yet lightweight trains. Featuring an aluminium fuselage construction – like the body of an aircraft but designed as a train – bolted on to lightweight steel railway carriage under-frames. Hence we have to this day a train that is lighter in weight than "light rail". The value of this particular train is amply demonstrated by the fact that 92 vehicles were built to this basic design from 1949 – 1968.

The very last two car set constructed was 638/738 in 1968 which was specifically built with a more powerful Cummins diesel engine for hauling a parcels trailer on the steeply graded Casino to Murwillumbah line. These railcars have a long history in this area.

The trains were deployed on lines throughout New South Wales, serving both urban areas and the lightly constructed, remote pioneer branch lines. In 1973 our train was modified, along with four other sets at that time. New Cummins NT855 -R2 engines were fitted which were more fuel efficient, produced cleaner emissions and were considerably quieter than the GM diesels originally fitted. These trains were reclassified as "660 class" sets and from the 1970s their operation was primarily around Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle.

This train (motor coach 661 and trailer 726) was withdrawn from service between 1991 and 1994 and from 1995 sat in yards at Lithgow State Mine Railway until 2013.

The railcar set was leased from Lithgow State Mine Railway who financially contributed to its heritage restoration. Further to this contribution, thousands of voluntary hours were invested by

the dedicated and passionate team at Lithgow Railway Workshops to restore the railcars to their heritage state. This project would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, dedication and support of the team at the Lithgow Railway Workshop.

From 2015 the train was used for (predominantly sold out) tourist runs in and around the Lithgow area until it was taken back to the workshop to carry out the conversion from diesel to solar power.

Of the ten two-carriage sets built in Chullora in 1949, this set is the only one that remains in operation. The Rail Motor Society has three sets at Paterson, one of which has been converted to provide accommodation. Another set at Lithgow is in poor condition awaiting restoration. And there is a non-operational set on exhibition in Armidale. One carriage was burned to the ground by vandals at the Lithgow State Mine Railway in 2005 and the remaining carriages were scrapped, two of these following their partial destruction for an episode of the ABC series Police Rescue in 1992.

"As a passenger service this train is excellent. It can run at 115 km/hr although it is running at slower speeds in Byron Bay. It's quiet, lightweight and clean. There is a country-wide movement back to train transport as people are realising its benefits. It keeps cars off roads, lowering the death toll, it facilitates human interaction and above all it's immensely sustainable given the high passenger numbers. Movements such as repurposing, minimal use and steam punk have all contributed to the train being revalued".

The project is the brainchild of former coal mining magnate Brian Flannery, who owns the Elements Resort in Byron Bay. Partnering with Nickel Energy and zero emissions racing company Elmofo, the consortium upgraded an old railway line and searched out a train which could be converted for the job.

Jeremy Holmes, development director of Byron Bay Railroad Company the not-for-profit organisation that manages the service, describes how they found a classic train: "We searched the country and found a dilapidated vintage train, restored it, and are now powering it with a 4.6 billion-year-old power source." Volunteers from the Lithgow Railway Workshop also helped bring

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SOLAR-POWERED TRAIN CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the red rattler back to life.

Flannery funded the Byron Bay solar train project with no government assistance, and has earned praise from industry and inspired hope that more projects will follow this one. The project has attracted worldwide media attention and has been touted as a way for smaller rural towns to beat the growing problems of traffic jams.

The '661,' as the train is sometimes known, made its first journey in December 2017 – a 6km round trip between Byron Bay station and North Beach. It currently runs an hourly service that can accommodate up to 100 people and, of course, surfboards and luggage. Holmes said the Byron Bay solar train was able to make between 12 and 15 trips on one full charge. Given the current timetable of 16 total trips per day, even the smallest amount of sunlight means that the train can operate comfortably.

AND OFF INTO THE SUNSET ...



Finally we get to see Tony's A3. He brought it along a few weeks ago to give it a trial on the club's track and also to see how it rode on his road trailer.

There were a few teething troubles, but nothing untoward as there would be with any new engine. It is now back at base (Ruakaka) to have these wee problems ironed out.

Tony has promised a story on his exploits with this loco.



Lloyd playing trams ... somewhere in the U.S.A.



The things you have to do today to protect people from themselves.



"Frankly, I don't enjoy prostate exams any more than you do!"



How many times have you heard this.

IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:—

Whangarei Model Engineering Club, Inc,
P.O. Box 10233, Te Mai, Whangarei 0143.

