

# Northern Views

ISSUE No 329 ..... OCTOBER 2019

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

Website: [wmec.org.nz](http://wmec.org.nz)



## Father's Day In Conjunction with Barnardos

This year the two above events fell on the same day (i.e. September 1).

This also meant that we have had to put on three running days in this period and this really stretched the manpower to run for these events. The ordinary Running Day (1 of 3) turned out to be a fizzer because of the rain, and we packed it in a little early ... but the Barnardos special was an absolute sell-out in every sense of the word.

It was a free ride day and the crowds never stopped. A queue stretched from our platform down the hill toward the "big" railway and was that way for most of the day. This created a problem in as much that there were not enough of our members to maintain a faster turn-round. I am sure that if we were charging a fare then our esteemed treasurer would be rubbing his hands with glee.

I believe there were only four members running the whole show so consequently this helped create the large queue. Unfortunately I couldn't be there as I had a previous engagement with a machine called a Linotype at MOTAT in Auckland.

The club was not the only group that was swamped with humanity. All the clubs on the grounds were running at top speed.

The reason for all of this was that nearly everything was free, even the sausages. I did hear that over 1500 were dispensed during the course of the day.

### QUICK KWIPS:

- 💡 If you try for the impossible you often manage the extremely difficult.
- 💡 "I'll do it tomorrow" can make tomorrow the busiest day of the week.
- 💡 The trouble with being a good sport is that you have to lose to prove it.
- 💡 People are like teabags — got to be in hot water to find your strength.

## CLUB NOTICES

**3rd Sunday Running** — October 20, 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 Workday

By The Editor



Finally a start has been made on the alterations to the inside of the container.

Considering the space that is available inside for storage, it's about time that it was used to advantage.



So Tony and Rankin got stuck in and to date it is about half completed with the other half not far away.

Replacement of sleepers and re-alignment of the track between bridges 2 and 3 has been completed and was in use on last month's running day (with speed restrictions). This section is in a damp and soggy area and was long overdue for an upgrade. It was given a slight workover the following Wednesday.

The use of screws rather than nails to fasten things in place was a doddle. Nearly 100% of the old nails were either badly rusted or not there at all. The slightly larger diameter of the screws necessitated the drilling out of all the old holes in the sleepers.

And at this stage I have to ask: "What did we do before the invention of the power-pack portable drills?"

Tony has done some additional work on the trap points at the end of the steam-up bay.

AND ... Lloyd has been beaver away in the green shed building a wheelbarrow carrier. The idea being that a wheelbarrow load of ballast could be loaded on this wagon and taken right to the spot where required and tipped in the middle of the track where needed. Our other ballast carrier had a drawback in that it could only be tipped sideways.

I hope to have a picture of this in next month's magazine.



## LIST OF MAIN CLUB OFFICERS

**President:** Rodney White. Telephone (09) 436 1185. E-mail; [rtw@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:rtw@slingshot.co.nz)

**Vice President:** Rankin Kennedy. Telephone (09) 430 8328. E-mail; [jenandrankin@gmail.com](mailto:jenandrankin@gmail.com)

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Bruno Petersen. Telephone (09) 438 7600. E-mail; [brunopetersen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brunopetersen@xtra.co.nz)

**Committee Members —** Colin Smith, Ian Mison, Lloyd Cross, Brian Mould.

**Newsletter Editor —** Ian Mison. Telephone (09) 434 3125. E-mail; [julianm@xtra.co.nz](mailto:julianm@xtra.co.nz)

**Charters and Bookings —** Rodney White. Telephone (09) 436 1185.

**Postal Address:** Whangarei Model Engineering Club (Inc), P.O. Box 10233, Te Mai, Whangarei 0143.

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



# TEDDY BEAR'S

# PICNIC

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13th, 10 am — 2 pm

This event will no doubt boost the numbers of passengers as it is on the same day as our normal Third Sunday Running, so a few more operating bods on-site will not go astray.

## Good News for Steam-hauled Excursions



KiwiRail and FRONZ are working together to train more steam crews and later this year the first of the LE's steam trained will be let loose on main line metals.

### **This is Great News**

### **Other Club's Events:**

**Southland Model Engineers:** Great Little Train Show. Invercargill.  
26th-27th October

**Havelock North Live Steamers:** Labour Weekend. 25th-28th October

**Nelson Society of Modellers:** Annual Open Weekend. 26th-28th October

**Hamilton Model Engineers:** Twilight Running. Oct 18, Nov 2, Nov 26, Dec 14.

**Hamilton Model Engineers:** Steam & Steel Convention. 9th-13th January 2020

## **ANSWER TO QUIZ ON PAGE 2:**

### ***The Granville Train Crash in Sydney. 1977***

Australia's worst rail disaster took only seconds to happen but was a decade or more in the making. The Granville train crash on January 18, 1977, claimed 83 lives and injured 213 others.

Granville revealed gross inadequacies in New South Wales (NSW) railway maintenance and taught the emergency services a lesson about the welfare of workers like those who raced against time to free survivors on that hot January day.

#### **How it unfolded.**

The 06:09 train from Mt Victoria, in the Blue Mountains, to Sydney had at least 469 passengers on board by the time it left Parramatta station in the city's west. At 08:10, its electric locomotive derailed on an 80km/h (50 mph) curve in a deep cutting at Granville and speared into the supports of the Bold Street bridge above the tracks.

The locomotive tipped on its side and dragged the first two carriages off the rails. Eight people were killed in carriage one, which tore open as it hit a power stanchion. Everyone survived in the second carriage. The bridge, with four cars on its deck, teetered for a few seconds, then rained at least 470

tonnes of concrete and steel on carriages three and four. The weight crushed the roof of the wooden-framed carriages to within 60cm (24in) or less of the floor. Some areas were crushed to floor level.

Within minutes, a vast rescue team assembled - police, firefighters, ambulance crews, doctors, nurses, engineers, railway workers among them. The cutting hindered initial access until ladders, then stairs, could be erected. The accident drew civilian volunteers, some just teenagers, to lend a hand but many ghoulish sightseers turned up as well.

By 08:50, 1500 people lined the cutting. The crowd spilled onto the tracks. Some disguised themselves as rescue workers and climbed onto the unstable bridge wreckage for a closer look, risking the lives of trapped passengers and their

rescuers beneath. Doctors, nurses and police rescue crews crawled into tiny spaces to reach the injured, with rubble above likely to shift and further compress the carriages.

In one instance, a police rescue officer was lying prone in a 35cm gap from floor to roof, clambering among victims' bodies to get to an injured man.

A doctor had to amputate the arm of a dead woman to aid the rescuer but, without warning, a slab shifted above and compressed the carriage another 5cm, injuring the officer's back.

Police were diverted from the rescue to control the crowd.

Gas was leaking into the carriages, preventing the use of oxy-acetylene cutting equipment. Power lines had to be cut one by one before cranes could begin lifting pieces of the collapsed bridge.

The stifling heat sapped the rescuers. Compressed air did little to ease the sweltering conditions. Emergency lights strung through the carriages added to the heat. Seven trapped passengers suffered potentially lethal crush syndrome - in which potassium, acids and other toxins built up in a person's trapped limbs can be released quickly once they're freed, causing life-threatening heart, respiratory and kidney issues. Three died from it. Nevertheless, Granville became an object lesson in treating crush syndrome. 'This will never go away'. One policeman used a knife to cut through seats and remove springs to ease pressure on trapped passengers. The last living person was freed around 18:15 but died in



**An aerial view of the collapsed Bold St bridge.**



hospital. The last body was extracted 31 hours after the crash.

Tina Morgan, the youngest survivor of the disaster, said the scars from that day will never heal. "It will never go away. For thousands of people involved, this will never go away, it's major trauma," she told the Australian Associated Press. Ms Morgan, then 14, was trapped for at least five hours with her back injured and a piece of timber piercing her chest. Of the 77 passengers in carriage three, 44 were killed. In carriage four, 31 passengers out of 64 were killed. The efforts of emergency workers were praised following the disaster, but a debrief a month later showed there were some problems. In some instances, there was too much help on hand, crowding the scene.

A disaster simulation conducted near Granville only weeks earlier had prepared medical teams well, but the review found too many medicos came to the scene and could have been better used if directed to nearby hospitals. Volunteers sometimes complicated things. At one stage, up to 30 people were observed trying to carry single stretchers.

Importantly, there was no plan for psychological support for emergency workers traumatised by the appalling scene. In all, one-quarter of emergency staff at Granville reported symptoms of anxiety, depression and insomnia a month later. The National Association of Loss and Grief was established in 1977 in response, and commenced work with workers adversely affected by the disaster. Psychological and pastoral care became more available to emergency service workers.

An inquiry headed by the then NSW District Court chief judge, Justice James Staunton, began in February 1977. It revealed that the Bold St bridge



**Considering that NSW locos are driven from the left it is a miracle that the driver survived.**

had been struck by derailments on the same section of track twice before — by a locomotive in 1967 and a loaded coal wagon in 1975. The track there was in a "very unsatisfactory condition", poorly fastened and badly aligned. The tracks had spread wider than standard gauge. On the morning of the crash, this caused the locomotive's front left wheel to drop inside the track and sent it careering into the bridge.

The defects should have been identified and repaired, with failures reaching into the highest echelons of the Public Transport Commission (although no-one was held directly accountable) and exacerbated by a high turnover of track inspection staff in the months before the disaster. Budgetary constraints were also a factor. The Public Transport Commission ran at a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

Among his recommendations, Justice Staunton called for senior emergency personnel to be trained in disaster management and that more general training in crisis intervention be provided in crisis management for health and welfare workers in traumatic events. ●



**Memorial adjacent to the crash site**



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

