



NORTHERN DISTRICTS MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY (PERTH) INC.

January — February 2019

30th Australian Miniature Traction Engine Rally

EACH year the Australian Miniature Traction Engine Rally has come and gone and I have often thought about going to it. This year (2018) was the 30th annual rally, hosted by Cobdogla Steam Friends Society at Cobdogla Irrigation and Steam Museum located on the Murray River in South Australia.

I had been there before and thoroughly enjoyed the informal friendly atmosphere of the place. So our air tickets and car hire were booked. Cobdogla is a pleasant 220km drive through the Barossa Valley but has only a caravan and camping site. However Barmera, a further 6km on, has plenty of accommodation.

Cobdogla has the only Humphrey pumps in the Southern hemisphere. These pumps are something to behold and it's hard to imagine how the very water it pumps is used as a 72 inch piston oscillating 300 tons of water on a four stroke cycle up to nine strokes per minute and delivering 2600 gallons per stroke — 1.5 million gallons per hour!

The pumps have no suction so they are below the level of the river and they push the water up 9 metres which then gravitates out for irrigation. They were fuelled by producer gas and as the local supply of timber began to run out and the inevitable installation of electric pumps occurred, they were shut down in 1965, but they are now preserved.

There have been problems with the gas retorts and

gas leakage so until all health and safety requirements are met it won't be run for a while.

If it's cranked up in the future I might make a special trip just to feel the ground shake as they say it does on every firing stroke.



The massive Fowler Z7 ploughing engine and the B6 crane dwarf the visiting miniature Foden steam wagon.

More photos on page 3...

The site also has a 2 foot gauge railway which runs for a kilometre out into the vineyards and they had the 1906 Bagnall saddle tank loco fired up on both days and took us for trips, together with the loco driver's dog which insisted on coming along for each ride.

On Saturday they had the Fowler B6 crane engine in steam and on Sunday the Fowler Z7 Ploughing engine was also in steam. The B6 would pull out the ploughing engine's cable for 50 metres and then it would be pulled back by the Z7. It was all very casual and we were free to climb over the engines, which is great to see. The museum also has stationary engine displays, a tractor shed and various steam engines and pumps which were used for irrigation.

The rally had about 20 entrants with various traction engines including a ploughing engine, several steam wagons, and Case and Buffalo Pitts engines. Unfortunately the ground surface was a bit sandy in places and the smaller engines and wagons were getting bogged. However the weather was good and it was a great weekend.

Article and photos by Richard Turner

Inside this issue:

President's report	2
Steel boilers	5
Sandgroppers 2018	6
Bill Walker profile	8
Christmas party	9
Esperance visit	11
Katanning visit	12

A New Year begins

HAPPY new year everyone, and I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas, and you got something special for the workshop or the bookshelf in your stocking.

The Christmas party went well and was enjoyed by all who attended. Councillor Perkov kindly visited our party during the afternoon and spent an enjoyable time riding the trains with his daughter.

Father Christmas also paid a flying visit in the afternoon and arrived by train to the delight of the children. Quite obviously, they had all been good through the year and so they all received a present from him. The prize for the best decorated loco on the day was Suzanne and Peter Smith's electric "Sues", so well done to the Smiths, and thank you to all who decorated their locos for the day. Some photos follow, and a report by Tom Winterbourn is on page 9.



Above: The appropriately decorated winning loco, "Sues".

Below: Someone has been good! Photos: Tom Winterbourn



Right: Ho, Ho, Ho! Santa's train arriving at the station hauled by Allen Ward and his battery loco "Waterloo".

President's Report



By Steve Briggs

There are some good things happening in 2019. The 34th birthday party is on Sunday, 17 February (note change from original date). It has an online RSVP form, so don't forget to fill this in to help us with organising this event. The link is: <http://www.ndmes.org.au/birthday/>

Of course, planning is also underway for Sandgropers on the weekend of 9 and 10 November 2019, so do keep that weekend free in your calendar. Well done once again to Paul James, who has taken on board the organising of AMRA for 2019, which is an important event as it showcases the skills and the models

of the club members. If anyone can volunteer to help him with this event, please let him or me know, as he has done such a lot for the club already.

Charles Coppack is to be congratulated for his hard work in creating a garden bed alongside the toilet block, with reticulation also installed. When the flowers are planted it should look a picture. He also has plans for a raised flower bed near the steaming bay. On another gardening note, in the new year the club will be trialling the introduction of a gardener who will work on our gardens for 12 hours a month, to help with clearing the site. We have some lovely mature trees on our block, but they do drop a lot of leaves, and we all know how much trouble British Rail has with those on the tracks!

All this takes a lot of time and effort to remove, so a gardener will be an added support to this task. The introduction of a second skip bin to remove this green waste will also help. The hiring of a gardener goes to show that we still have maintenance jobs to be done around our site, and inside the entrance to the clubhouse you can see a whiteboard with a list of the jobs that need to be done.

So, if anyone can spare time on a Tuesday or Saturday morning to come and help and support the running of the club, please let me know. The next Tuesday work day is on 8 January, so come along and join the Tuesday crew.

All in all, I am looking forward to another interesting and enjoyable year at the club with all the members and their models.

Steve Briggs



30th Annual Miniature Steam Rally (cont...)



(Continued from page 1)

The line-up of miniature engines for the daily Grand Parade.

Photos: Richard Turner



Above: A nice Case traction engine — to an American design.



Left: A trip behind the Bagnall through the vineyards — and Ron Collins making new friends, with the train driver's dog!



Above: Another of the museum's outdoor exhibits — a Thompson water pump from 1924 driven by a triple expansion steam engine.

Free to a good home



Five painted plywood light-duty display table modules, each table top module measuring 1090 x 1100 x 100mm.

They were originally built for an HO model railway layout, and can be bolted together in different configurations to make up a large square, rectangle, L- or U-shaped table. Complete with 12 wooden leg assemblies, bolts and nuts.

If anyone has a good use for these please contact Jim Clark on 0407 988 746.

Help us celebrate 34 years of progress

ALMOST 34 years ago, a group of model engineering enthusiasts came together to sow the seeds of what is now a thriving Northern Districts Model Engineering Society. That meeting, attended by 11 kindred souls, was held at the home of Doug and Sue Baker on February 9, 1985.

On Sunday February 17, the society will throw it's gates open to all model engineering and miniature railway devotees from AALS affiliated clubs in WA to help us celebrate our 34th birthday. The committee recently decided to reinstate our annual birthday celebrations following the very successful 30th birthday party in 2015.

One of those who was at that inaugural meeting way back in 1985, Steve Reeves, is still very active at the club while another founder member, Jim Crawford, recently made a welcome return to the club after a lengthy illness.

The City of Stirling has played a pivotal role in the development of the club and its facilities, firstly granting the leasehold to our present site in April, 1987, providing the fencing for the site, providing a substantial grant to help fund the access ramp over the tracks and also providing the toilet block jointly shared with the adjoining BMX club (which has recently been rebuilt into a modern facility). Stirling Mayor Cr James McNamara officially opened the raised track in 1993 and 12 years later, Mayor Tony Vellalonga officially opened the clubhouse on February 24, 2005. Four years ago, Mayor Giovanni Italiano was the guest of honour at our 30th birthday bash.

As with our "30th", we hope to have good representations from other AALS-affiliated societies, both in terms of members and locos, traction engines and model engineering displays, and also we plan to welcome back people who have, in the past, helped us get to where we are today.

Please register at: www.ndmes.org.au/birthday.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

General Meeting	Friday	January 11	8:00 pm	
Club Run Day	Sunday	January 13	9:00 am — 2:00 pm	
Public Run Day	Sunday	January 27	10:00 am — 2:00 pm	
General Meeting	Friday	February 8	8:00 pm	
34th Birthday Invitation Run	Sunday	February 17	8:00 am — 6:00 pm	Note changed date!
Public Run Day	Sunday	February 24	10:00 am — 2:00 pm	

Know your Society

President	Steve Briggs	0400 691 864	president@ndmes.org.au
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Boiler Inspectors	Ron Collins	0427 461 279	
	Phill Gibbons	9390 4390	
	Steve Reeves	9354 1395	
	Noel Outram	9525 1234	
Librarian	John Martin	9206 2325	
Birthday Bookings	Paul Costall	9572 1385	
Driver Training	Phill Gibbons	9390 4390	
Safety Compliance Officer	David Naeser	9276 8709	
Newsletter Editor	Jim Clark	0407 988 746	jimclark@hardwareandsoftware.com.au
Website			www.ndmes.org.au
Society On-site Phone Number		9349 0693	
Society Grounds and Track Site	Vasto Place (off Balcatta Road), Balcatta		
Postal Address	NDMES, PO Box 681, Balcatta 6914, Western Australia		

Building a steel boiler at home

(continued from Nov-December 2018 issue)

Next are the flat plates. These are best laser cut or water cut. If you don't have access to CAD, the company you choose will produce the cutting file for their machine for a price. It is worth paying the cost to get the plate cut; it will save you hours of work.

You can, of course, buy a sheet of boiler plate (with a certificate giving you heat numbers), then mark out all your plates. Cut them out to size yourself with the oxy cutter and grind up the edges.

The next step is to grind all the weld preps.

Some of you with big machines can, of course, machine them. Before you start on this, mark all your plates with [1] plate top; [2] plate front; [3] what it is; [4] water side or fire side or outside. Now mark the stay holes and weld preps on the correct sides — see photo below.



Before doing any cutting or grinding, get a reliable person to check your work.

Most of the welders I have used prefer 45 degree weld preps rather than "J" preps, plus these are easier to machine or grind.

Now make yourself an assembly jig — see next photo.



This is quick and simple to build and will make assembly a breeze for you and the welder can position your boiler at any angle he wants to make his job easy. Easy for him means quicker and this means you pay for less hours — win-win all round!



Engineering Matters
with boiler inspector
Phill Gibbons

The dome and fire hole is usually made from standard size tube and flat plate, or can be as in my case cut from Duromax

thick walled tube available from the Steel Store, Beete St, Welshpool. Remember your paperwork (certificate with heat number).

The photo at right shows the two different types of dome — on the left is Steve's built up dome and on the right is Phill's thick wall tube version.

The bolts to hold the dome together are usually grade 8.8 and this number is stamped on the bolt head.

To be continued next issue...

Article by Phill Gibbons, photos by Steve Reeves



Above: Partly completed weld prep on a stay hole. A rotary burr is used to grind the chamfer out to the circle of centre punch marks. Left: Grinding weld preps on the plates — this is best done outside as it generates a lot of dust!

Good weather, great venue, but where were the crowds?

SATURDAY of the Sandgropers weekend dawned fine and sunny in Bunbury, the grass was freshly mowed and the track was ready, but disappointingly, attendance was well down on previous years.

There were only about half the usual number of traction engines in steam, and only two from NDMES — those of Steve Reeves and Jim Clark. The story was much the same with visiting locos, with less than half of the number that we have previously enjoyed either watching, driving or riding behind, and no action at all on the elevated $3\frac{1}{2}$ " track.

Nonetheless, those who did make the effort to attend on Saturday enjoyed the perfect weather and a great day's steaming in Forrest Park, followed by the traditional dinner and desserts in the SWMEA club house. Unfortunately, because so few people stayed over, Sunday was largely a washout apart from a few stalwarts who took the opportunity to run their locos on the virtually empty tracks and to watch the one remaining traction engine in steam.

This event has always been held in such a relaxed environment with the convivial atmosphere and the friendly hospitality of the host club, so it was a bit perplexing to find so many people absent this year, not only from NDMES but from other WA clubs as well.

Why is this? Are we all getting too old and grumpy to be bothered with these sorts of gatherings any more? Are two major functions in one year too many? (Remember, we had the AALS Convention in Bunbury at Easter, which was a well attended and successful event). No doubt some people had very sound reasons for not being able to attend, but when added together, there were an awful lot of absences in many areas!

There has recently been some commentary of this sort in Australian Model Engineer, and even in the UK Model Engineer. It seems similar declining attendances at events in the Eastern States has led to the cancellation or the reduction in number and frequency of inter-club runs there. Are we heading the same way? I hope not!

Article and photos by Jim Clark



Preparing for the day's steaming at Forrest Park...



Above: Pamela Clark gets driving instruction on the Forrest Park tram from the builder himself, Colin Puzey.



Right Ron Collins takes a spin round the track on Tom Winterbourn's Black 5.



Left: Early in the day and Lindsay Lockhart is making an offering to the steam gods: "I'm sure I remember where this bit goes..."

Right: Lindsay soon fixed the problem and he and several others went on to have a very relaxed day's steaming in the park.



Notes from the Boiler Group

AS 2018 rolled rapidly to a close, there was a flurry of steel boiler making, led by Phill Gibbons and Steve Reeves — see the ongoing technical series on page 5.



Leaping slightly ahead of where we are up to with that construction series, here are Phill and Ron carrying out the hydro test on Phill's boiler at a recent Boiler Group day. Needless to say, apart from a minor dribble, it passed fine.

Which just goes to prove that you can indeed build a steel boiler at home, even if you do need a bit of help from your friends.

There has still been some copper boiler activity despite the recent intrusion of steel. Eric Ilett from Eaton near Bunbury has been attending while building the boiler for a very nice 2" scale Durham & North Yorkshire traction engine, which he brought along in December — see photo at left. He is a prospective new member of our club.

Coincidentally, the current issue of AME features an article on the same traction engine which has some unusual features for those interested in reading further.



Above: Another "show and tell" at a recent boiler day is this nearly complete half-chassis of Phill Gibbons' articulated Mallet loco, the boiler for which is the subject of his current Technical Matters series.



Admiring the detail on the 7 1/4" Crampton loco currently being built by Ron Collins (2nd from left) are Lindsay Lockhart, Lyall Austin and Tom Winterbourn. Photos: Bill Walker

Mr Gadget Man (aka Richard Turner) always has something of interest to talk about. This time, it was an aeolipile or simple radial steam turbine, as documented by the Greek Hero in the 1st century AD (right).

Apart from some more high-tech items like ball bearing suspension and using isopropyl alcohol for fuel, this thumb-sized unit is almost identical to Hero's turbine of nearly 2000 years ago and after a slightly shaky start it spun at surprisingly high speed.



Lyall Austin has also been busy, producing some high quality workmanship with this water feed pump for his stationary engine setup (left).

We should soon have a very comprehensive and varied selection of stationary engines and steam plant to look at during model boiler steaming events.



Finally, here is Paul James washing out a Heidi boiler as part of a major overhaul of the club loco that took place in December.

That's about it for 2018 — there's lots more that I could have put in, so apologies if your project hasn't been mentioned yet.

Happy model engineering in 2019.

Jim Clark

The end of steam — but not of steam locomotives

Member profile No 8, Bill Walker

(continued from November-December 2018 issue)

Dr Beeching became the first chairman of the new British Railways board on 1 June, 1961. On 27 March, 1963, he issued his fateful report entitled “The Reshaping of British Railways”.

When his report was issued, I was on a diesel course in Derby School of Transport and was very surprised to see that he proposed to close the Buxton to Manchester Piccadilly service, our busiest and most important line to Manchester. It was carrying 24,000 passengers a week. Freight had been removed from this line and put on the Midland main line, which was to be kept open.

The town of Buxton did not accept the report and a two day inquiry was held in Buxton on the 27-28 May, 1964, by the Transport Users Consultative Committee. Buxton passengers were represented by Barrister Sam Silkin QC.

The town won and the railway was reprieved and it was the first railway saved. However, it was a Pyrrhic victory as many railways around Buxton, including the Midland main line, were closed.

The results were dramatic: 600,000 people worked on British Rail in 1950 and by 1979, that was reduced to 275,000. There were 7000 stations in 1961, reduced to 3000 by 1969, at the same time 18,000 miles of rail track was reduced to 12,095. The last time-tabled steam train left Liverpool for Carlisle on the 4 August, 1968.

An interesting footnote is that in 2013, the Buxton to Manchester line that was saved back in 1963 carried 1.7 million passengers a year with 300,000 from Buxton.

As a result of the Beeching Report and widespread closures, steam engines were being scrapped and there was a public outcry that some should be saved. British Rail bowed to the pressure and agreed to save a small number, one from each famous locomotive designer.



Then in January, 1963, a businessman, Alan Pegler, bought an iconic engine, the London North Eastern Railway (LNER) No. 4472 “Flying Scotsman”, that was due to be scrapped. It was iconic because it was the first steam locomotive to officially run at 100 mph.

He also negotiated an agreement that he could use it to run charter trains. Pegler had it overhauled, repainted apple green and began running special trains. One train he organised in April, 1964, was from Manchester Central to St Pancras London. I believe it was the first time a large LNER locomotive had run on the Midland main line. One of the sheds I relieved at was Trafford Park MPD at the back of the Manchester United Football ground and I was the acting Shed Master there when the “Flying Scotsman” arrived. It was a shed that was easy to access and soon after it arrived we were invaded by hordes of little train spotters looking for the “Flying Scotsman.”

Running sheds are very dangerous places and I had to remove these children as soon as possible. While this was going on, the LNER footplate inspector and the driver came to see me to tell me the “Flying Scotsman” had been derailed. The inspector was distressed and almost in tears as he had accompanied the locomotive from the Eastern Region to ensure there were no problems.

I went to look at the derailment. Luckily it was a minor derailment and I quickly re-railed it. The photograph (below left) was taken just after it was re-railed and shows the train driver explaining to me how it was derailed. The second photo (top right) is the “Flying Scotsman” outside the sheds.

So in spite of Beeching, No. 4472 and a number of other steam locomotives were saved and are still running today on preserved lines and occasionally on the main line.

At the end of 1965 in the middle of this chaos, I was seconded from British Rail to the Kowloon Canton Railway for three and a half years — but that is another story!

Bill Walker



4472 after the derailment at Trafford Park. Photos: Bill Walker collection

A real family Christmas get-together

WE had a visit from Santa, there was plenty of good festive food, family members and camaraderie. What more could we wish for at our Christmas get-together at the track on December 9. And the weather was perfect, too.

Steve Reeves had his spanking new 7¼" Juliet "Sarah Jane" in steam for all to see, Sue Smith had her battery loco "Sues" all decked out in Christmas bunting, Ed Brown tried his hand at the smaller stuff (Paul James' "Bushfly") while Paul Costall supervised his son and daughter driving PJ's steamer.

And then City of Stirling Hamersley Ward councillor Karlo Perkov dropped in with his daughter for another ride on what he describes on his Facebook page as "these marvellous little trains". He went on: "Real coal, real steam, how can you not like trains?"

Canadian member Doug Pitney was there, albeit with broken toe (that's a story for another time!), and the look on the kids' faces when they received a present from Santa made all the planning worthwhile.

The only sad part of the day was that when Santa arrived, president Steve Briggs could not be found to welcome him! Perhaps the photos in the President's Report on page 2 give a clue. Here are further pics to capture a little more of the atmosphere of the day.

Article and photos by Tom Winterbourn



Young Ethan Audino (11) showed more than a passing interest in Steve Reeves' brand new 7¼" Juliet "Sarah Jane". Ethan, being the grandson of club stalwart Clive Jarman, has lived with miniature trains for most of his life and has frequently driven Clive's 5" "Romeo". He is pictured here being given a run-down on the cab layout of "Sarah Jane" by Steve, watched by mum Sharon, Clive's daughter.



Paul Costall hams it up for the camera as he supposedly keeps an eye on son Alex, at the controls of Paul James' "Bushfly".



Left: Ken Austin looks on as grandson Ryan (4) opens up his present from Santa.

Coal stocks replenished

A SMALL group of members (three, in fact) replenished the society's coal stocks on November 28 with one-and-a-half tonnes of the "black gold", courtesy of Bennett Brook Railway. It was a somewhat disappointing response to a call for help in relocating the coal by president Steve Briggs, although Geoff Wilkinson did offer to hire a trailer to help out.

Steve, committeeman Charles Coppack and Laurie Morgan presented themselves and their trailers at BBR's Whiteman Park loco depot and loaded up, with the aid of a front-end loader. Now that BBR's 2018 steam season has come to an end with the approach of

summer, and a ban on steam trains, the coal was no longer required. So we were invited to help ourselves.

Picking it up was the easy part. Unloading by shovels into nine big drums was the hard part. The plastic drums had been prepared beforehand by having valves inserted near the bottom of each, so that water used to keep the coal "fresh" could be drained off as and when a new barrel of coal was required for use for steam locos.

As a "reward" for their efforts, the trio were provided with a quality BBQ lunch under the clubhouse veranda. Our thanks go to BBR for the provision of the coal at a time when our existing stocks were becoming depleted.

A relaxed day for our last run of the year

IT WAS another good day at the office for locos and operational staff at the last public run for the year on November 25. Despite the threat of showers, the weather stayed kind and a big roll-up of our public supporters enjoyed a relaxing day on the trains and in the picnic grounds.

Very complimentary comments were made by many visitors as they left the railway. While the day wasn't as busy as the two previous runs, it was nonetheless an above average day played out by members in a very relaxed manner.

Prime people movers were Ron Collins' Heidi, Phill Gibbons' O&K "Irma", Tom Winterbourn's Black 5 and Dave Robinson's big diesel on the GLT and the 5" Blowflies of Steve Reeves and Paul Costall, Steve's battery loco "Ocker" and Noel Outram's battery-powered diesel outline on the raised track.

It was good to see our Canadian member Doug Pitney back for another stint in Perth.

As usual, the BBQ was "manned" by Clive Chapman and Andy Davies, while Lesley Hodges and Sue Smith's sister looked after the kiosk.

Article and photos by Tom Winterbourn



Nicely framed! Steve Briggs takes the station bypass line driving Tom's Black 5.



Steve Reeves gets away from the station with his gas fired Blowfly.



Left: Big and small: Noel Outram and his battery-powered, sound-equipped Bo-Bo diesel head for the tunnel on the raised track as Dave Robinson and his 'slightly' bigger yellow diesel follow on the GLT.

Dr Phill to the rescue

SOME few days back I was linishing a piece of steel and slipped, resulting in my finger hitting the belt. It was a new sharp belt which made short work of my index fingernail — mostly gone and lots of blood.

After much foul language, which as we all know eases the pain considerably, I went back to the finisher and immediately got a spark into the wound with instant pain! Same again when I washed my hands, in fact just about everything I did aggravated the thing.

Later that day I was Araldite some rope ends with 5 minute Araldite, so I dabbed a blob over the wound and waited for the pain.

Surprisingly there was no pain and when it had set completely I had a new nail, so to speak, which was harder than the original.

So now I am back to full duties! *Phill Gibbons*



Caution: We take no responsibility for the medical efficacy of this remedy if you choose to try it at home!

Above: Phill's new Araldite fingernail.
Photo: Jim Clark

Esperance visit in November 2018

ON a recent sojourn to the south west of our State, we ended up at Esperance and as luck or good management would have it, we were there for the Esperance Miniature Railway Public Run Day. These guys open every Sunday and *every* day in the school holidays — that is some commitment by the members!

We met five club members and were made very welcome. Pete, who drove the Lahore loco all day, was a delightful bloke, an ex-farmer and boilermaker who was recently stood down from the Port Authority works but still had a big smile on his face! The engine is owned by the club along with two other diesel outline engines. One was a B class, but I'm not sure about the other one.

The Lahore was a bit tired but still slogged around pulling a rake of 4 wagons running on Collie coal, which looked good quality. The other steam loco has been sold to someone in Merredin.

The track is interesting in that starting out from the station facing one way you proceed out over bridges crossing duck ponds and travel about 1.2 kilometres running through spring loaded points to return to the station facing the opposite way. On the next trip you leave the station in the opposite direction, crossing the same duck ponds and end up back at the station facing the original way. I went out twice and am still confused (yes I know it doesn't take much!)

There was a section of 5" gauge track but the 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " ran all the way round.

A train ride will cost you \$3 and there was a quiet but steady stream of people taking rides. In the summer holidays it's very busy, so I plan to go down with the Lawley when it's finished and have a "busman's holiday" there and drive, drive, drive!

I did suggest that they hold a convention there as there's lots of room and it's closer for the Eastern Staters and is only 700 kms from Perth. It would need some organising with the sections of common track but would be a great venue.

One magnificent structure is the bell tower. It is truly outstanding, constructed of brick with lots of detail work. It has bells in the shuttered section which chime on the hour and can also, as we heard, play various tunes, the one we listened to was *Waltzing Matilda*. Absolutely brilliant! I understand that the tower funding and construction was taken on by a club member with work being done by contractors and club members. The statues, four of them, are bronze and weigh over 4 ton each! The workshops are behind the arches and there is a good size workshop and a hydraulic lifter similar to our club's for unloading locos. There is also an undercover patio area with marble-look tables and benches, a ticket office and a club room.

We also went round the Port on a free bus tour. However, it is quite depressing as there is no iron ore being shipped out due to the low price and low grade from Kambalda, and no sulphur being stored because the nickel mine is shut down at Ravensthorpe.

The lithium will start being exported again in December, although

in much smaller quantities, and the grain silos were empty but will soon be full from the harvest. The iron ore may start up again but the new owners will not be using the ore car unloader, which is similar to the rotator at Dampier, but use bottom unloaders instead.

We stayed at a caravan site opposite the Port. There's one at each end of the main drag, and it's only a short walk into town and the grog shop.

There's lots to see around Esperance, but ignore the Pink Lake, which isn't! The wildflowers were still out and the coastal scenery is outstanding. Well worth a visit.



Esperance member Pete on "Lahore"



Above: Off we go around the park again...



Right: The magnificent clock and bell tower.

*Article and photos
by Paul Costall*

Katanning visit in September 2018

PETER and Sue Smith, Noel and Barbara Outram, and Ray Cooper and Veronica from Bunbury all went to Katanning for their public run day on Sunday, 23 September. Sue took her diesel-electric engine and Ray took his steam engine “Amy” to assist on Sunday’s public run as Katanning’s steam engine is out of action due to boiler failure.

On the first test drive, Sue’s diesel engine derailed, so Noel took to the tools to assist the maintenance track crew to fine tune the rails and wiggle around some of the ballast so as to avoid any more derailments.

Now it was time for us all to have a few fun laps around the track to familiarise ourselves with the hills and gullies. It takes a little over 5 minutes for one lap — there is lots to see, a dry river that has crocodiles, a gully with assorted snakes and large lizard, dead bird turn were the bird has fallen out of the tree, frog creek with assorted size frogs, and lots more to see on your journey around the track.

Before we knew it, the time had come to open to the public. The Katanning club had asked all young ones to come dressed up as their favourite book character. The public loved the new trains visiting for the day and the trains were in great demand. There was a sausage sizzle for anyone that didn’t bring a picnic lunch and lots of ice creams and drinks to choose from in the kiosk.

Even so far from home, out of the blue you never know who or what you will see!! Keith de Graauw and his lovely wife were cruising up the street in their Winnebago and saw four people in red shirts driving a train, so they turned around to investigate. Keith was very surprised to see four of his fellow club members playing trains and preparing for Katanning public run day.

The day was a great success. The people were very friendly and seem to be having a great day. I know we all did!!!

Article and photos by Peter and Sue Smith

Right: The visitors getting set up — Peter Smith and Ray Cooper with his loco “Amy”.



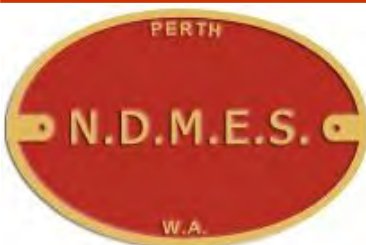
Below: A few track adjustments...



Now we're away!



Left: Some of the small people who came dressed as book characters.



Northern Districts Model Engineering Society (Perth) Inc.

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www.ndmes.org.au

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