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New passenger car storage facility

Storage of the passenger cars inside the tunnel has long been an inconvenient necessity at NDMES, due to a lack of any secure alternative.

The solution was dedicated storage sheds, but in the case of the 5" cars and locos this required a means to transfer the cars from the main track to the shed.

The answer involved flexible points or 'bendy beam' and transfer rail arrangement. The first concept was built by Tony Jones and Ken Cooper in 2012, but proved to have a few design flaws and was abandoned.

Another design concept was spotted by Andrew Manning in Guildford, UK, while on a visit there and the details were acquired for our use. Some modifications were required to suit our specific needs and after some internal deliberations a set of manufacturing drawings were produced by Ken Cooper.

Whilst the storage tracks inside the shed and transfer track are basic fabrications, the interesting part is the flexible track in both 3½" and 5" gauge mounted on a pivoted rigid beam assembly.

The 'bendy' section comprises rails 6.4mm thick made from four Stainless steel laminations loosely bolted together to give flexibility. Each lamination is made out of shorter sections with slots and gaps in between to allow lengthening or shortening of the track length during bending.

The rails are mounted in sliding sleepers which control the track radii when the beam is moved between the two



Andy Davis and Ken Cooper with the completed "bendy track", clearly showing the alignment for the storage shed. The "main line" is to the left. Ian Huxtable was unfortunately absent when the picture was taken. Photo: Tom Winterbourn

positions (main track or storage shed). The sleepers are mounted on a sub-base manufactured by Bob Otway.

Initially the positioning of the sliding sleepers was to be controlled by a long former, positioned in the centre of the track, which had the two operating radii laser cut along its edges. This eventually proved unworkable due to insufficient stiffness of the former and insufficient space to 'beef it up'. So for now it will be a two-man operation and it is planned to have a simple diagram displayed to show correct operation.

It has been a lengthy project headed by Ken Cooper, ably assisted by Ian Huxtable, with a few other members contributing along the way (Doug Pitney, Andy Davis, et al), but the end is nearly here with just a few minor jobs to finish off.

On Sunday, February 23, the system was used for the first time and worked well. There are plans to extend some track at the back end of the transfer rail to provide additional flexibility of passenger car and engine movements.

Andy Davis

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

General Meeting	Club Meeting Room, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	8:00 pm	Friday 14 March
Club Fun Run Day	Club Track Site, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	9:00 am — 2:00 pm	Sunday 16 March
H&F Sausage Sizzle	Hare & Forbes, Belmont		Thurs-Sat 27-29 March
Public Run Day	Club Track Site, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	10:00 am — 2:00 pm	Sunday 30 March
General Meeting	Club Meeting Room, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	8:00 pm	Friday 11 April
Public Run Day	Club Track Site, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	10:00 am — 2:00 pm	Sunday 27 April
General Meeting	Club Meeting Room, Vasto Pl, Balcatta	8:00 pm	Friday 9 May

Know your Society

Your Committee:

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English as she is writ!

Clive Chapman had reason to change his Li-ion phone battery recently – it was probably life-expired – and when he got it out he took the time to read some of the instructions on it.

As with most electronic items of late, it was made in China and some of the instructions had a very loose English translation indeed.

What do you think of some of these instructions:

Do not blow strong.

Do not near the fire source heating, and

Do not arbitrary transform the demolition.

Now that it has been translated from Mandarin, Cantonese or whatever, into Chinese English, who's game to further translate it in English we can understand? If that is you, a bewildered Clive is waiting to hear from you!

Welcome back!

You've got your newsletter back! After a much too lengthy period, we've put fingers to keyboard to bring you up-to-date with what's happening around your club.

This revamped newsletter will be reproduced on a bi-monthly basis to get us underway and, who knows, we may even go monthly again further down the track (pun intended!).

The newsletter will contain a mix of "news" articles on what's happening around the Society, focusing on key projects, some personal snippets on who's doing what in the model engineering sphere, interesting travels with a decidedly rail flavour and, what we salivate over each edition, the President's musings!

In this "first" edition, we focus on the "bendy track project", which has seen us move the raised track passenger cars out of the tunnel and into the new shed at the far end of the steam-up bay. We also take a look at the ladies who make it all happen at our public running days and a somewhat disappointing trek into the Himalayan foothills to visit the World Heritage-listed Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, one of the truly great

train journeys of the world.

On page 2 of the newsletter you will find the names and contact details of those who represent you on the Society Committee and also the Boiler Inspectors. Contact them if you wish to raise any matter at Committee level. You will also find a list of club and public running days.

Of course, any newsletter is only as good as the information it contains, and this has been one of the problems in the recent past. What I am alluding to is we need your input to help make it as interesting as possible – and having your tongue hanging out for the next edition! The ball is in your court. So, please tell me about your interesting model engineering project so we can share it with other members.

Jim Clark has agreed to continue as publisher and will use the Publisher software and templates previously used to produce the new look magazine.

Happy training days.

Tom Winterbourn, Editor



New member John Wilson gets away from the station driving Bushfly, hauling a group of happy passengers at the February general public run day.
Photo: Tom Winterbourn

Cathy's passion has not dimmed

by Tom Winterbourn



Cathy McCafferty deals with the morning rush at the February run day, with passengers lined up to the entrance gate. Photo: Tom Winterbourn

As a young teenager, Cathy looked forward each month to riding the little trains at Balcatta. Her father, Jim Crawford, had just arrived from Tasmania and one of the first things he did after settling in Perth was to join NDMES.

Cathy was one of four children and, oddly enough, was the only one interested in the miniature railway.

Fast forward 30 years and Cathy, with five children of her own, still enjoys the passion that is NDMES. Her mom Jean, who works with her in the kiosk, and Jim now have “nearly 12 grandchildren”.

The pair has run the kiosk taking entrance fees selling drinks and snacks on running days for the past five years, taking over from Tony Jones, who was suffering health problems.

Have they seen many changes over the past three decades? Have they what! In that period they have presided over a doubling of turnover – “gate receipts” and kiosk sales.

They have seen the café develop from just tea and coffee to drinks, ice cream and light snacks.

“From revenue of \$300 to \$400 we are now taking up to \$2000 on a good day,” Cathy said. “Mom and I have also taken \$300 on fridge sales alone”.

Asked what she attributed this tremendous growth to,

Cathy pointed to “excellent customer service” (!), complimentary comments on Facebook by playgroups and parent groups and word-of-mouth. Cathy also records important data on takings for the auditor for our annual report.

Like any job, there are highs and lows. The “highs” definitely included meeting and talking to visitors from all over the world, seeing the faces of excited children as they travel around the track on our little trains “and the complimentary comments and gratitude of parents for offering a service they appreciated”, Cathy said.

“On a particularly wet day I remember our party guests going upstairs into the clubrooms and while the parents interacted with each other, the kids put on their raincoats and gumboots and had a ball riding our trains in the wet!”.

And the lows? The constant “battle” with some people over the club’s requirement (for insurance purposes) that all passengers wear closed-in footwear, even though we do provide suitable footwear for hire.

Cathy’s five children are now aged 16, 15, 13, 11 and 9, and all have come to the club for rides, but only 15 year-old Isabel has shown any active interest in the club.

Cathy and Jean – could we do without them? Nope! Long may they continue in their present role as the “face” of the club.

A Presidential Overview

As President, it is with great pleasure that I am able to contribute to the revitalised Steam Lines.

We have not produced a newsletter for a considerable time and much has happened since the last one was published.

In the project development area, we have seen the building and installation of our 7¼" ground level track, storage areas for raised track riding cars, and major upgrades to the grounds and picnic area in general.

These are only some of the improvements and do not include the ongoing maintenance and general work carried out by our dedicated membership.

Projects in the pipeline include improvements to the ground level track and a new storage shed for larger riding cars (for which building and planning permission has been obtained from the City of Stirling), a workshop area and improvements to our meeting room, including the recent installation of a new air-conditioning system.

During the past couple of years, our public run days have developed into a real social event for participating members and we have seen record public attendances.

It is also pleasing to note that our membership is still in excess of 50 and, although some fluctuation has occurred, we have maintained this level over a considerable period.

Our Tuesday morning working party in particular is well attended, with an average of 12 or 13 members, and manages to accomplish much. Perhaps our biggest regular social event is the 10am coffee break, when many of the world's problems are discussed!

In conclusion I would like to thank all our members for their dedicated support in all activities associated with the society's calendar of events.

Paul James, President



An example of the big support from the public at the February run.

Photo: Tom Winterbourn

Committee Decisions

Some of the items discussed at the February Committee meeting:

- Paul James and John Turney have placed an order on a new large storage shed. Track Layout for storage in new shed now being considered.
- Andrew Manning to co-ordinate Friday meeting items of interest.
- Damien Outram to prepare a 5-10 year plan for the club for future discussion.
- Reticulation/sprinkler upgrade. A larger sprinkler will be installed to see if it gives better results.
- Lawn mowing roster prior to public run days. Paul James to table a roster.
- Container roof repairs/cover. Paul James to organise sheets and fitting.
- Newsletter revival. Tom Winterbourn to liaise with Jim Clark.
- Donation: Paul James suggested our prior agreement to make a donation to charity should go to the Hills Bushfire Appeal with a donation of \$1000. To be tabled at the next meeting.
- NDMES invitation run. Discussion followed with the motion from Andrew Manning that the September Club Run Day will be open to other clubs. Meeting agreed. Damien Outram to organise and discuss at next General Meeting.

AMRA is Here Again!

Our society again has a commitment to the 2014 WA AMRA model railway exhibition at Claremont Showgrounds on May 31 and June 1 and 2.

The February committee meeting entrusted the organisation of our participation to Steve Reeves and Damien Outram, with Steve co-ordinating the roster.

Their task will be to promote NDMES at the expo by facilitating public access to our trains, organise loco drivers and use PR skills to interest the public in our activities and explain the various models on display.

Damien suggested we purchase new signs for wall mounting.

As in recent years, our track will be laid against the back wall. Discussion took place at the committee meeting on how we can vary the track and make it more interesting

for passengers and also how best to channel passengers on to the trains.

It was also decided not to increase the price for rides, which will remain at \$2.

It is hoped the preparation of the track and facilities and also clearing up after the expo doesn't fall on to a small band of workers, as happened last year. So, as many members as possible are being encouraged to help set-up, run and clean-up afterwards. If you're willing and able, Steve would be delighted to hear from you.

Remember, this is the only big opportunity we have every year to "sell" our society and facilities outside our normal sphere of operations, so your input would be greatly appreciated.

Hare & Forbes Sale Day 'Social'

The next Hare & Forbes machinery sale will be held on March 27, 28 and 29 (Thursday to Saturday) and again we have been asked to provide a sausage sizzle.

This event is held twice a year and in addition to earning the club a not inconsiderable amount of money, it has also proved a great social event for members, where they can get to discuss anything from model engineering to world affairs.

The last event in September, 2013, was a grand affair, with much chatter and more than sausages being thrown on the barbie!

And in addition to the social interaction, members on duty can also purchase sale items with a further 10 per cent discount.

The roster is now open for this month's gig, so please get in touch with Tom Winterbourn either via email at twinterbourn@ozemail.com.au, mobile 0415682931 or personally at the club.

At the last sale we had at least five members for each day – more than we needed but sufficient for lively discussions. So, let's hear from you sooner rather than later.

More Agony than Ecstasy

by Tom Winterbourn



Left: A line-up of British-built 2ft gauge "B" Class locos built between 1889 and 1925. A total of 34 were built, but by 2005 only 12 remained on the railway and in use (or under repair).

Below: A close-up of loco 788 "Tusker" dead on Darjeeling shed.

All Photos: Tom Winterbourn.

We all have those days when nothing seems to go right. But when you travel half-way around the world to fulfil a long-held ambition and it all falls apart, the vocabulary can be a little more forthright than the "bugger" in the Toyota commercials.

My plan was to travel up into the Himalayan foothills on the World Heritage-listed Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) in the latter half of last year after spending a fortnight in Myanmar (Burma).

I guess, on reflection, a portent of what was to come happened before I flew out of Australia. It appears the Indian Railways no longer accept Internet bookings outside of India and after being stuffed around by the recommended Sydney travel agent who forgot to make the booking, I enlisted the help of the uncle of a Burmese friend. But by then, all the trains from Kolkata to Siliguri, to connect with the DHR, had been booked out, due to the sheer volume of lowlanders heading up the mountain to escape the heat. So, a booking was made on behalf of myself and Burmese travel companion Ron on a coach through the night. And what an experience that turned out to be. It appears these kamikaze coach drivers



have a schedule to keep and driving on the wrong side of the road in the face of oncoming traffic seems the norm.

I'm a bad traveller on coaches at the best of times, so the sick bag I fortuitously nicked off the plane came in really handy. About 20 miles from Siliguri we came to a sudden halt, with a fatality on the road ahead. We eventually got to Siliguri about three hours late but there was no worry about missing the DHR train, as all had been cancelled due to rockfalls in two places! I had previously been advised that the iconic British 0-4-0T steam locos were only operating at the top end of the line, between Kurseong and Darjeeling. The southern terminus of the 78km mountain railway is New Jalpaiguri.

So, we piled into a 4WD taxi, which we shared with about six other people (!), and headed up the mountain. As we climbed up over 5000ft, the 2ft track joined our road into Kurseong, 4864ft above sea level. It was at this point that I spotted my first steam locos, dead in the little shed alongside the road. My misery was complete when I found out no steam locos were operating as the landslips prevented coal being transported up!

(Continued on page 8)



One of the hazards of travelling at over 7000ft. A NDM6 diesel-hauled train from Darjeeling to Kurseong passes a 4WD in the clouds.

More Agony than Ecstasy (cont...)

by Tom Winterbourn

At Darjeeling, over 7000ft up, we soon discovered the merits of three-dimensional maps. Our hotel was indeed a short distance from the station, but we climbed upwards further than the distance indicated by the one-dimensional map! As Ron has a heart condition, we summonsed a porter to carry his luggage while I struggled onwards and upwards. When we did eventually reach our hotel, I counted 72 steps to our room – with no lift! And the geriatric owners at the reception had obviously had a charisma bypass!

I spent a fair bit of time at the main loco shed and station, taking pictures of the steam-less locos and watching movements of diesel-hauled trains in and around the station, while Ron conserved his energy up the stairway to heaven. We also visited a tea plantation. After a week in Darjeeling, a marvellous part of the world I must admit, we hired a taxi to take Ron and the luggage down to the station while I walked and we then caught the diesel-hauled Toy Train to Kurseong, where we spent another couple of days.

An unusual feature of this trip was that much of it was “up in the clouds” and where the track cut corners by crossing from one side of the road to the other on sharp bends, it was difficult to see the cars, even with their headlights on – and vice-versa. And as life is still

pretty basic in this part of the world, spare a thought for the women who try to get clothes dry on fences, walls, lines etc when there is so much moisture in the air.

Unlike Darjeeling, a traditional terminus station, Kurseong station is a dead end, with “up” trains from New Jalpaiguri and Siliguri (when the line is operating) running straight into the station and then having to reverse out and across a busy road junction before climbing through the town’s narrow and crowded streets towards Darjeeling. Likewise, “down” trains have to reverse into the station before heading south again. I have since read that the station was built this way so that the train could be stabled in a secure yard while passengers alighted for refreshments.

Our host at the Kurseong hotel, Mr Singh, arranged for us to have a private taxi down the mountain (I was sick again!), but there was no more coach travel for me! I had previously booked with Air India to fly us back to Kolkata from Bagdogra Airport, just outside Siliguri, to continue our travels to Goa and Chennai.

Despite the disappointments of this trip, Darjeeling (or Gorkha to give it its local name) had much to offer, with its predominant Nepalese inhabitants. It is so different to mainstream India. Would I go back again? You betcha!

Tom Winterbourn

Future Directions ...

Now that we have, hopefully, got the Steam Lines newsletter back up and running, we will continue the “old tradition” of focusing on our run days (and other significant events, such as AMRA and conventions), with words and a pictorial roundup.

This will include what locos were running, particularly visiting locos, who did what (yes Ian, we won’t forget you on the BBQ!) and any significant private bookings.

It is also our aim to update members on the various projects around the club, as they happen, and to give more feedback on decisions made, particularly at Committee meetings, which most members do not attend.

But, as stated elsewhere in this newsletter, it is only as good as the information supplied, so come on chaps, let’s have your contributions.

Tom Winterbourn, Editor

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