



The Squeaky Wheel



The MOTAT Society Newsletter
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Season's Greetings

The Chairman and committee of the MOTAT Society would like to take this opportunity to wish its members and everyone associated with MOTAT a great festive season and look forward to your continued support in the coming year

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS MOTAT NIGHTS



Photoshopped image by Evan James

Guest Editorial

by MOTAT Society chairman, Henry Swan

Usually a Chairperson's message at the end of the year or at the start of another is a summary or perhaps a positive enticement to action and I, being a stalwart believer in tradition, I should maintain the status quo, but, this is not the year for that.

However, in spite of this, I wish you all a happy and successful 2016 and will remain ever hopeful that one day soon MOTAT's four tenets of "collaboration, Integrity, Creativity and Stewardship" will be observed by their authors.

Rather this is the year for a precautionary tale, it is the tale of an Italian migrant to New York who, in the nineteen fifties wanted to provide a better life for his family than that which they had back in his native Naples and so he decided to set up a hot dog stand in Times Square.

Now of course there were already other hot dog stands around but he worked very hard and put in long hours, he took notice of his customers which made him popular and successful.

His point of difference was the generosity of serving of his much revered hot dog, heavy with onions and sauces, business was good and got better, he was generous and so opened other stands and his brothers ran them along his lines and all were successful.

Well, after the first 40 years of success with five stands thriving, his eldest son now long through College and a successful lawyer, his daughter and other son close behind, our Italian migrant friend thought that he would like to open a more permanent establishment than one on wheels and so he sought advice.

After much thought and with careful selection and also at great expense he employed a manager – who was known as THE EXPERT.

THE EXPERT was affable visiting each of the stands and talking to each of the brothers, he wrote down what they told him, went away and devised a plan!

THE EXPERT hired many staff to help him solve the problem and write reports and publicise things with glossy pictures.

But still no improvements were forthcoming.

THE EXPERT devised a new strategy, he then called in THE CONSULTANTS who visited the hot dog stands wearing smart clothes, smiling sagely and taking notes. THE EXPERT and CONSULTANTS looked serious and concerned and because these people thought that they knew best they all conferred and wrote lengthy reports, presented very large invoices to the brothers and disappeared.

The reports told the brothers that they were doing it all wrong! That business was bad and that worse was to come.

The consultants and EXPERT said for the brothers' business to survive they must paint the hot dog stands in primary colours with vertical stripes and immediately cut back on the onions or they would lose business, and surely die!

Our migrant from Naples and his brothers nervously read the reports with astonishment and some misgivings but because THE EXPERT was so well qualified and convincing and along with his consultants they all knew best, the brothers did as they were advised.

Frantically they re-painted the hot dog stands in primary colours with vertical stripes, cut back on the onions..... and very soon, sure enough their business got worse. THE EXPERT was right!

This was most disappointing to our previously very successful brothers who conferred again in surprise thinking that there must be some kind of mistake.

They then went back to the expert (who no longer needed block capitals) and told him that they had done exactly as they had been advised and that things were getting worse.

"Don't worry" said the expert "I know some better consultants from a land far, far away and merely for the cost of their business class flights and first class hotels plus a bit layered on top we can get them to have a look at what is going wrong here and advise us."

The brothers reluctantly agreed with the expert and soon - back came more consultants with their pencils sharpened and their wallets wide, wearing warm friendly smiles and carrying very sharp axioms.

They too talked to the brothers, wrote down what they told them and went back to the casino, (sorry, hotel) and wrote large reports

with trendy jargon, lots of graphs and geeky double-talk.

These reports were handed over after the invoices were paid and off went the clever and knowing consultants to their land far, far away without a care (or responsibility) in the world to be consulted elsewhere.

The new report told the brothers that they were still doing it all wrong, that the business climate was bad and that worse was coming in the financial world and for their business to survive they must repaint the hot dog stands in primary colours but changed to diagonal stripes (the original consultant was only partly right) then they must cut back on the mustard and shorten the sausage or they would surely lose their business which would die!

The brothers gravely listened to the expert and very reluctantly, repainted the verticals to diagonals and cut back mustard, shortened the sausages exactly as they were told in the reports and sure enough the consultants were right, there was less trade.

Fewer people wanted their hot dogs, their business shrank to almost zero, it was terrifying.

Business got so bad that the brothers held a conference and said we don't like this but it seems that the expert and all his staff and consultants were right all along, things are real tough at the moment we can't afford to stay open like this and so broken hearted, they shut their stalls one by one and gave them to the expert to hold for posterity.

COMING UP AT MOTAT

• from mid-December

Science on the Move

• January 4 - 31 January holiday programme

Apocalypse How

• February 14 Fire and Rescue Day

• February 20 Body in Action opens

• February 26 and 27

Idea Collective street fair and marker market

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In this issue

Page 3 Transport news

Tower wagon refurbishment, A40 donated
Society administration changes

Page 4 Model railway getting new lease of life

Page 5 Aviation news - restoration of Sunderland

Page 6 Tram news - restoration of 21,
Barn doors mural finished

Page 7 Printing news - new folder donated

Page 8 Military news - naval artifacts uncovered

ROAD TRANSPORT

TOWER WAGON GETS NEW CAB

After several months of work by the Road Transport Section, the Bedford tower wagon for maintaining the Western Springs Tramway overhead wiring is almost back in action.

The truck was withdrawn from service when it was found the cab was badly rusted.

Road Transport's Murray Wilson said another cab was obtained from a wrecker in Thames, which was in very good condition for its age, with only a few small rust spots to remove.

When rebuilding the cab, the best parts from both cabs were used, and new windscreen rubber was imported from Australia. Parts swapped from the old cab including the wiring loom, as none was in the replacement cab, and all bolts and screws were renewed.

DEVON ADDS TO 1950s VEHICLE FLEET

The MOTAT collection of 1950s vehicles received a recent addition when a 1952 Austin A40 Devon was donated to MOTAT.

Road Transport's Murray Wilson said that 1950s vehicles were quite often overlooked, simply because they were part of many people's lives.

However, the fact was these vehicles were now 60 or so years old and becoming increasingly rare, and needed to be saved now if they are to be viewed by future generations. He said the recently acquired Devon was in good condition for its age, with a running motor and a only a little surface rust.

The main problem has been getting brakes, which had rusted solid, working again.

It is currently being exhibited in unrestored condition as parts are acquired for a full restoration.



Adding to the MOTAT collection of 1950s vehicles is this 1952 Austin A40 Devon sedan. The Road Transport section is exhibiting it in unrestored condition as parts are acquired for a full restoration.



The Western Springs Tramway's tower wagon for maintaining the overhead wiring stands outside the road transport workshop awaiting the finishing work before it re-enters service.

both pictures by Evan James

SOCIETY ADMIN CHANGES

There has been a reshuffling in the MOTAT Society administration as a result of changing roles by key personnel.

Frances Young has taken over the role of Administrator and Treasurer, in addition to her role as editor of The Driving Wheel magazine.

As a result she has stepped down from her position on the Society committee.

That vacancy has been filled by the previous administrator and current Squeaky Wheel editor Evan James.

His election to the committee was affirmed unanimously by Society members in an e.mail ballot.

Also on the ballot paper was a proposal to reduce the committee meeting quorum to five, which was also affirmed.

Society chairman Henry Swan said he would like to see at least another two more people on the committee and we have called for nominations from the sections and from individuals.

AMAZING SOUNDS FROM EXHIBITION

One of the more popular hands-on exhibitions at MOTAT is the Sounds Amazing exhibition opposite K.900.

Designed to enable patrons to discover the science of sound the exhibition was developed by Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and History.

It has been designed for participants to have fun while learning how sound is made.

For children and adults alike, they learn by playing with weird and wonderful instruments in a well-orchestrated examination of the second sense.

The exhibition engages hands, eyes and ears. How to get notes from string, wind or percussion instruments is revealed by strumming giant harps, striking gamelans, playing slap-a-phone (bongo pipes), or playing the keys of a giant keyboard.

MODEL RAILWAY GETTING NEW LEASE ON LIFE

After several years of inactivity, new life is being breathed into the model railway display under the band rotunda at MOTAT 1.

Answering a call from the museum for volunteers to maintain and run the railway, were two young enthusiasts, Aaron Pilkington and Sean Heenan both with an extensive modelling background and also with a background in live steam railway modelling.

They found a model railway showing its 35 years of age, with tired scenery which comprised mainly dried hemp and yarrow weed, burnt out parts on points (turnouts) and locomotives that did not run.

They found an extensive stable of locomotives, including a Ww, Wab, Ab, and F class steam locomotives, two types of Df, De, 2 Dx, 2 Da, and a Dbr class diesel locomotives, and a Blue Streak and Silver Fern railcars, none of which worked, and a small fleet of wagons.

Although the layout was built to Sn3.5 scale (1:64), common for modelling New Zealand Railways rolling stock, the only working locomotive was a HO scale (1:87) model of a South American prototype, similar to the NZR Da class.

They also had found an electrical system in some disarray. A contractor had at some stage connected a 20 volt power supply to the layout instead of the usual 12 volts, which resulted in considerable damage, including burnt-out point (turnout) components.

The first day consisted of a large cleanout, with 4 wheelie bins of rubbish being removed, and several vacuum cleaner bags full of dead cockroaches.

There was also a maze of wiring that had been chopped out from the control panel that had to be sorted out, which is an on-going process at present.

After the initial clean out and track clean, work then turned to getting the points operating again, which meant removing the points and replacing the burnt out parts.

They said that there are still points that need attention, and once they are all fixed it is hoped that the scale NZR locomotives will be able to run for 9 hours a day, 7 days a week, but until then all that will be able to run is the HO scale locomotive.

Once that is done, it is planned to install a digital command control system on the layout (DCC), upgrade the house lighting, and renew the scenery

MODEL RAILWAY



photos by Sean Heenan

ABOVE: Aaron Pilkington at the MOTAT model railway

BELOW: Raurimu station on the model railway with three of the locomotives on show, a Wab (front) and Ww class steam locomotives, and Df diesel locomotive



MODELS DESIGNED TO COMPLIMENT EXHIBITS

In a series of articles for Squeaky Wheel magazine MOTAT Society Life Member Les Downey looks back at the history of the model railway display under the band rotunda

The Early Days.

Many Museums have models complimenting their bigger exhibits and it's fitting that a transport museum should have a model railway.

MOTAT was no exception.

When I became a member of MOTAT in 1970 one of the exhibits was a model railway in a large display window fronting the veranda of the building now used as a staff and volunteers lunch

room and sited behind locomotive K 900.

MOTAT at that time leased a model railway club an area of land to place its own building on.

These arrangements were great during establishment phases but as space became a premium and a club's interests grew in different directions, differences became apparent.

Catalyst For Change.

There came a time when MOTAT made the club an offer for its building and the club's members found alternative premises.

This of course left MOTAT without a model railway which was always a popular crowd pleaser.

continued on next page

GETTING CLOSE TO MOVE DATE TARGET

The Short Sunderland flying boat is getting close to being moved into the Aviation display hall, with a target date of February next year.

Aviation Section's Norm McKelvie said work is currently being concentrated on the starboard wing, with the flaps and aerolons to be overhauled, and the float fitted before the whole assembly is painted. Once that is done, the covered work area enveloping the wing will be dismantled before the aircraft can be moved inside..

Once inside the tail can be fitted and finishing work carried out.



ABOVE: Rob Reece at work on the starboard wing of the Shortland flying boat under the cover of a protective envelope.

LEFT: Dennis Lowden (left) and Richard Cornwall working on a section of the starboard wing on the Short Sunderland flying boat.

both pictures by Evan James



continued from previous page

I submitted a proposal to the then MOTAT Director Ron Richardson for a new model railway and to fit in with the transport side of MOTAT I suggested it should be representative of the New Zealand Railways and of the North Island Main Trunk Railway line which is the backbone of railways in New Zealand.

Mr Richardson liked the idea and asked for costings and what today would be called a business plan.

To provide a greater understanding of the Main Trunk railway for the public I planned the pelmet display of historic pictures showing transport prior to the railway, together with the construction, operation, and other relevant aspects of the railway line and life around it.

This was a considerable undertaking and to tell the story in detail would fill a reasonable sized book so this account will be just some of the memorable happenings.

Where To Put It & How.

At the time the Band Rotunda at MOTAT 1 was being built under the then government's work scheme and Mr Richardson favoured the model railway proposal for the rotunda basement rather than an alternative aquarium plan so I had a full green light for the project.

Mr Richardson had plenty of supervisors for the Government Work Scheme but none with knowledge of MOTAT so when he heard I had left my employment he asked me to join the staff as Special Projects Supervisor.

The model railway construction became the third task of my tenure as the Special Projects Supervisor. Being the project supervisor didn't mean I got to walk around with a clip board and give instructions. Many times I was frowned at when I went into

the museum office to use the phone; seems one or two didn't approve of my sawdust, plaster dust, or paint splattered dress code. It was very much a hands on role.

The Design And Presentation Aspects.

Initially I had the assistance of two contract carpenters.

Starting with a rough track sketch I varied arrangements to achieve the best outcome for each individual scene.

My two carpenter assistants who were contracted to build the baseboards were extremely patient with my "can you lengthen this please, widen that, shorten over here, ease this grade etc".

The large Hapuawhenua viaduct provided an opportunity for a major viewing feature right opposite the venue entry so we had a floor to ceiling glass panel installed in front of this.

Having a continuous track run is always difficult when you have a doorway opening into the layout centre space, but with the Raurimu Spiral on one side, and room for a 300 degree curve at the other side we were able to fit that in satisfactorily.

Originally a model of the second Auckland railway station was built and fitted just inside the doorway to the left, but sometime after I left to emigrate to Australia that was removed and replaced with an access door instead of the duck-under entry to the controls.

When we built the duck-under entry, most of us were younger and more agile.

The North Island Main Trunk Railway was responsible for either establishing, or for much of the growth of many North Island inland towns, cities, and industries, so my intention was to acknowledge this aspect in the representation. Hence the world famous Raurimu Spiral, the viaduct, sawmill, and freezing works, together with the aspects of real life in the photo display pelmet.

CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE



ABOVE: Tony Messenger turning the thread on the one of the eight rods that will tie in the chassis of trailer 21 to the frame that will hold the body in place.

BELOW: The rods in place on one of wheels, running through the springs that will provide the suspension for the body. The yellow coloured body support frame was made from bar steel to the original Brill specifications at Stevenson's East Tamaki workshop.



TRAM NEWS

WORKING ON BODY FRAME WOODWORK

With work on the underframe of trailer 21 now virtually finished, work has now shifted to preparation of the wood for the body.

Working to the original specifications, Leyton Chan and his team have prepared the totara for the roof frames, ash for the roof bows, and kauri for the false roof droppers.

These will be sent to specialist woodworking companies for final machining and shaping with the aim of having a pile of parts to provide a kitset for the final construction.

Leyton said that after several unsuccessful attempts to shape the totara it was decided to try the old fashioned way of flattening the totara – by Stanley 5½ hand plane.

It was then a matter of running them through the thicknesser to get them to the required 1½ inch thickness required.

The ash “sticks” for the roof bows also had their problems. After shaping them to the correct size at MOTAT it was found that wood grain problems would not allow them to be bent to the correct profile by the outside contractor. It was then decided to cut them oversized and let the contractor do the final sizing and profiling.

The kauri false roof droppers were finished to the final size of 24¼ inches by 1½ inches by 4½ inches in readiness for a contractor to machine them a readiness for the final assembly.



Dressed timber awaiting the next stage of its conversion into timber for the body frame of 21. Left is totara for the roof trusses, centre is ash for the roof bows and right is the kauri for the false roof droppers.

photos by Evan James



PREVIOUS PAGE: Mural artist Daniel Mills at work on the final mural on the tram barn doors (PICTURED ABOVE). Daniel was finishing off the project, started last year with murals on the doors to the other two roads depicting part of the MOTAT tramway operations. He was photographed by Albert Chan working on the door to row 7, home of the Baldwin steam tram number 100. The part he is depicting is a cylinder lubricator. Daniel, from the Hibiscus Coast, has been painting murals in New Zealand and overseas, and was awarded Best NZ Mural prizes in the 2005 and 2007, the latter for a mural at Waipu Cove. Other examples of his art can be found at his website <danielmillspainting.com>.

PRINTING

DONATION OF MUCH NEEDED FOLDER

Printing's Graham O'Keefe received an early Christmas present when a small folding machine was donated to MOTAT recently.

It was a Shaws Homley folder which was donated by Laingholm printer Mr Keith Towl.

Graham said the small folder would come in very handy for the section which often had to send out jobs for folding.

He said the section had a much larger Cundall folder but this was too large for the space constrained print shop, but he hoped it would feature in a later display of printing machinery.

In the meantime Graham had drawn up a restoration programme for the new machine which would see it given a complete overhaul before being pressed into regular service probably early in the new year.

The book binding section recently returned to the printing shop after an absence of several years during which it moved from several other locations at MOTAT.

Graham said the room in which the book binders were housed was needed for other purposes by MOTAT, and a space had been found for them at the end of the printing shop.

He said he anticipated they would prove popular with MOTAT patrons visiting the print shop.



Printing's Graham O'Keefe setting up the Print Section's recently acquired Shaws Homley folder for a trial run soon after arrived from Mr Keith Towl of Laingholm.

Evan James photo

MILITARY

RIGHT: Poppy Sparrow emerges from The Military Section's APC (armoured personnel carrier), to the waiting arms of mum, Rikk (right). The APC rides, during the live days on the third Sunday of the month, have proved to be very popular with the public, although maintenance on the vehicle means the Land-Rovers will be filling in over the Christmas period.

Evan James photo

TREASURE TROVE OF NAVAL ARTIFACTS

A long lost treasure trove of artifacts came to light when the doors of a badly rusted container that had sat for many years beside the Military Section's workshop were prised open last month. Military Section spokesman John Tutchen said that the container was found to house many naval relics including carbon arc signalling lamps (smaller versions of the anti aircraft searchlight, one of which is currently under restoration by the section), 20mm Oerlikon gun magazines, and parts of the operating mechanism of the Achilles gun turret, now at the Devonport navy base, but formerly a feature at MOTAT 2's front gate.

The Achilles, a Leander class light cruiser, was loaned to New Zealand in 1936 and served in the Royal Navy's New Zealand Division before formally joining the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1941. Crewed mostly by New Zealanders, it participated in the defeat of the German pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" during the Battle of the River Plate on December 13 1939, scoring at least two confirmed hits despite being out-gunned, causing significant damage.

In 1985 the NZ Post Office issued a 45c stamp featuring the Achilles which was available on a matching First Day of Issue postcard. These were cancelled at the former MOTAT Post Office using a special postmark.

The Oerlikon 20 mm cannon was a series of autocannons, based on an original German 20 mm Becker design that appeared very early in World War I. It was widely produced with various models employed by both Allied and Axis forces during World War II, and was popular with the navies as an anti-aircraft weapon.

John explained that because the doors were virtually rusted shut on the container, the task of opening was put in the "too hard" basket in the past, but the extra effort was made last month during a clean up and re-organisation of the workshop.

The section also flew the MOTAT flag at a Warbirds open day at Ardmore aerodrome called "A Salute to Aviation History" where the section's Land-Rover, GMC truck, M113 armoured personnel carrier, and Loyd carrier were on display.



A special stamp issued by NZ Post Office in 1985 to commemorate the victory of the New Zealand crewed Achilles over the German pocket battleship Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate, cancelled at the MOTAT Post Office on November 6 1985. The MOTAT post office was opposite where K.900 now stands

from the John Tutchen collection



ABOVE: Patterns for new header tanks for the Valentine tank's radiators being produced in the Military Section's workshop. When finished they will be used to cast new tanks to replace the current worn tanks, one of which is in the photo being used as a pattern. The section has had to produce its own tanks because none were available locally.