

Our latest 'Life Member' John Watson hard at work as usual - *photo by Tricia*

CASTLEDARE MINIATURE RAILWAY (INC)

www.castledare.com.au

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From the Editors Desk – by Tricia and Robin

Welcome to the March issue of Cinders and Soot. It was nice to 'see' everyone at the recent AGM, albeit the majority of attendees were present via Zoom. We believe the format worked well for most members and the meeting was over in record time!

Just a reminder that the date for C&S submissions is in the calendar and photos would be appreciated.

Members Celebrating their Birthday this Month are:

* Biss	Stuart	* Depane	Luke
* Bollans	John	* Goodlet	Grace
* Clements	Ethan	* Mills	Harrison
* Davis	Carol	* Thompson	Stephen

Inside this edition:

Pages 4 to 8 – Reports from the AGM; President's and Secretary's

Page 8 – Congratulations

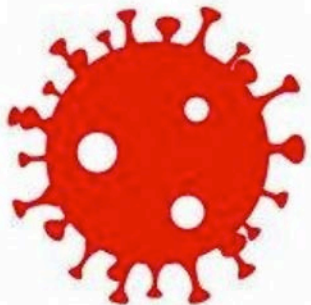
Pages 9 & 10 – CMR Gallery

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The COVID-19 notice below has been placed in various locations around CMR. Look out for it when you next visit! **Note; we still need to adhere to these requirements & the QR sign-in.**

COVID-19 Hygiene Important Notice



Please help keep us all safe by following these simple protocols:

- Wash your hands & sanitise before & after signing in (use your own pen if possible)
- Use your own cup/glass for drinks
- Sanitise ALL surfaces, including handles, tables, kitchen utensils, toilet and workshop surfaces/equipment, before and after use
- Magazines should be read **ONLY** if wearing gloves

NOTE: Hand sanitiser, gloves and paper towels are provided to assist you to comply. Please feel free to bring your own if preferred.

Thank you, from the CMR Committee

AGM Retiring President's Report (March 21 to March 22) – by Les Smith

This was a reasonable year considering the circumstances. Passenger numbers of 19,300 was a big improvement over the 12,100 for 2020. A disturbing point is that the number of riders per run-day has been declining. We normally lose 1.5 run-days per year mainly to bad weather whereas last year it was 7. Unfortunately, these days were in “peak” season where 1,100 riders were typical in the past. The reasons for the “drop-off” are unknown except for COVID or advertising. We have gone from over 900 per run-day to 800 in 2020 and now 660. This is not all that bad as it has been quite manageable. The Treasurer's report reflects a very strong financial position from the hard work put in by our membership. Some significant changes have now been undertaken and others are about to or will take place.

Canteen.

The Canteen has been closed. It took an inordinate amount of time and effort on the part of Cathy and Tania Watson in purchasing, stocking and organizing and electricity costs / equipment cost were factored into the decision. All this for just one run day per month and very little financial return made it unviable. With the success of the “coffee van” organized by Craig, it has been decided that we should pay back to our members on run-days a snack or two for lunch. Some trials were undertaken and now Anna has come forward to try her hand as our “catering officer”. The heating ovens will now reappear at WILSON and in the NIANA base facility. We hope that a cordial atmosphere will prevail with food ready at 1-00 to 1-30pm and then some members may wish to continue playing trains after. The complaints about “where can I get my lunch pie?” should now subside! Thanks must go to Cathy and Tania for the work that they have done over the years. A freezer will be donated to Yarloop primary school.

Run-day times.

We have changed our run-day timing from NIANA to match WILSON, that is, a 10-00am train departure. This has been done to have lunch at Niana and Wilson at a respectful time, to allow members more free personal time afterwards and that the pattern of “riders” now seems to have changed as we get through 500 rides in the first 2 hours. This time change alleviates confusion too and simplifies advertising. Work is in hand to update our signage.

Ticketing.

Multi-rider Cards have now been finally eliminated as our ticket sellers were spending about 33% of their time explaining and then giving 20% discount. A second seller's window was mooted and now it is seemingly not required. Discounting is not a good way to do business. Return per rider had increased from around \$3.89 to \$4.15 and a little more. We have now instituted a ride charge increase after a 10 year hiatus to the current \$4 and \$7 per ride and now our average per ride is another \$1 gain thus run-day revenue take has been increased. Riders still remark that we are value for money and or too cheap! The gate person now does not have to punch cards or handle tickets and not think about COVID. Overall, the revenue increase is welcome and more than pays for the lunches. It is recommended to the incoming committee to increase the \$7 to \$8 about mid-year. Other clubs are increasing their charges. This leads us to the next subject...

Insurance.

Due to delays associated with COVID we made two payments last year that could have drained our bank balance a little more than usual and spending was withheld /controlled a little more than in previous years. We can expect another increase in Public Liability premium later this year. The AALS insurance officer has kept Robin busy in making enquiries re our insurance and to date no problems have come to light.

We have a Government Grant to purchase personal protective items, to be issued soon, and USED.

Recent Shutdown.

The recent call to arms and temporary track closure by our Competent Person (Richard) to carry out track shoulder buildup was the best option to get the massive task done. Our member's response to the shifting, packing etc of several hundred tons of road base in extreme heat was magnificent. There were many reasons for the delay in doing this work mainly caused by persons using our track as walking trails, sand embankments, poor shoulder material, etc and some procrastination on our behalf of how to do it. Thankfully we have an excellent Competent Person (Richard) with the tenacity to drive this task forward. Ken thought that he was in perpetual motion ordering road base! After all of this we have to face track joint remediation, which is a legacy of by-gone persons of another era combined with a doubling of our train tonne gross kilometers since 2014 and with some very nice large locomotives.

Locomotives.

To move the passengers within the first hour and a half, and sometimes with few persons available, we need to operate a couple of double consists that require "heavy haulers" and the club only owns one such "beast" (Dependable). Although we encourage private locomotives, the Club must not rely on such alone. Vic Jones has agreed to rebuild our Carabao into a heavy hauler with a larger engine and refurbished hydraulic drive. The old girl will look somewhat different later this year, but then, it is not her first change in shape. The aging Comet Vale is back at work with the final drive upgraded per a donation from Vic. The City of Canning must come under consideration for a similar modification. At least one other club has expressed concern to their members about use of the club's assets for member's day / fun runs. They are encouraging members to use their own locomotives and rolling-stock to reduce wear / damage to the club items as these are the main source of revenue and warranted to be fit for public haulage. Has anybody admired Roger's painting and thanked him? This leads to the next phase in our progress.

Rolling Stock.

Our rolling stock is in very good condition and, again, we must thank Richard for the very time consuming and diligent effort for inspections and repairs. We now have trouble-free run-days. It is now very clear that we must have low down under-frame mass. During the year, Ken got serious and the WAGR Red Set was rapidly modified to include such. The Yellow Mk2 Set is only a couple of weeks away after recovering from a previous very hard damaging life. As mentioned above, we must look after (and clean) these assets as this is where we "place backsides on seats" for income.

New Carriage Shed.

A proposal is well in hand for a new carriage shed to cater for the growing demand for space, coupled to the old canteen that is planned to become a committee room and records storage. A decent traditional base area central clubroom can then evolve in lieu of the “breeze-way”. We are very close to submitting an application for “development” approval in readiness for a building permit. This is a significant move within the history of the club and a very long time in “getting out of the starting blocks”. It may well start with only one track in from the Fern Road track along an original roadbed. The 3-way set of points at the Niana track exit is earmarked for use at the shed doorway. The present old eating area under the awning will marginally increase in size and the use of this area in the future, for example, a model railway has been canvassed. The position of this “shed” has been carefully planned so as to “lurk” under the VISTA that precludes development in our main operating arena. The modification planned for the old canteen roofline will get us points towards an improved VISTA.

NIANA Station.

A major change for at least the first stage of an upgrade has been completed. The Track 4 platform has been concreted to serve double-consists. Slabs have been removed and attempts made for a reasonably level cross surface. The outcome to-date does not look too bad even if I say so myself! Despite taping off the fresh concrete overnight, persons out walking just lifted the tapes and walked on. There are some imprints from a very large dog, well, we think it was just a dog! Some thought must now be given to a layout change / upgrade to the southern end in a year or two for improved train operation management with consideration of also having resources working out of and back into a new carriage shed.

The SMS (Safety Management System)

At the behest of Richard back in 2012 a Safety Management System was commenced along with John Watson stating that a CMR weakness was “a poor corporate memory”. Documents were developed on a “needs” basis and in particular those required backing a Foreshore Management Plan that had been imposed upon us by the then Swan River Trust (SRT). A look at the AALS requirements showed the extent of compliance required to satisfy our insurer. In the last 12 months a concentrated effort has been made by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to get everything into order and then to store it on a “cloud” so that all members have access. With a couple of false starts, the SMS is up and running complete with our first Safety Plan and gathering up all of our records. Our Operations Hand Book does now require a revision with more work to be done, particularly for a Business Plan. Such a “plan” is highly recommended for the near future if CMR is to apply for external funding once the land is transferred to public ownership. Thanks to all those who have participated in the SMS project that can now place us in the upper echelon of brother clubs and stand up well to AALS scrutiny, which is to happen soon. Hopefully John, we will have a Corporate memory nicely captured by Tricia.

Signaling & Telecommunications.

Our S&T team is working to restore operational signals at Wilson and Niana into a more reliable format with upgrading. This followed on from a “melt down” from rain, a lightning strike or whatever earlier mid last year. Niana has been restored with new computers, communication links, security cameras etc. Rewiring of the Niana signal box is planned for

later this year. Digital examinations are in progress for tests such as Safe Working. We are not saying that our previous methods / equipment has not served us well but change swamps us everywhere. In my working railway life of 65 years there has been changes every 10 years to new signaling.

The Picnic Ground.

We finally get to an area that requires attention. The massive cleanups in Jan-Feb-March pre 1st Sunday running is now beyond the “remains” of the A-Team. Some discussion has been held with a contractor. The buffalo area that was seriously damaged some time ago requires to be finger raked to remove the rolled / ground in eucalypt leaves and top-dressed. Can we have some younger members contribute otherwise we pay? Prior to future 1st Sunday running there must be a cleanup on the Saturday morning prior or we close the ground off.

Closure.

As my opening states, this has been a reasonable year with added admirable progress towards the future. We have a volunteer miniature railway that has had little external assistance which may change in the future with partial “hand back” of the Church land possibly now late this year 2022, but do not hold your breath! The City of Canning will put us under scrutiny prior to this event so let us keep our area / buildings in a presentable condition. All members have to ask themselves the ‘Kennedy question’....”what can I do for the Club”, not “what the Club can do for me”. Thank you all for bearing with us through the Covid problems and for all the time and work put into CMR.

AGM Secretary’s Report – by Robin Greeney

The past year has again been challenging for Castledare with the impact of Covid on us. Not only have we had some closures but had to deal with ever changing requirements throughout the year. With the opening of the border even more are on the horizon. The past changes allowed us to recommence public run days from Niana station, which many members appreciated. Unfortunately track maintenance prevented the operation of steam via Fern Road and all Niana services were run via Wilson.

The support of members on our run days is very much appreciated – this tends to be the same band of volunteers each run day.... It would be good to see a few more attend. It is important to realise that the Railway needs lots of money to operate – and this comes from our patrons. We could run as a private club without public contributing but membership would have to increase to well over \$1000 a year... and as many members couldn’t afford that.... Numbers of members would decrease and cost per member would be even higher. I know many members are upset by the number of checks and quantity of paperwork required – especially on public run days, but they are absolutely necessary these days. Some railways are facing very high insurance premiums, but we are very fortunate that our provider has renewed our insurance with only a small premium increase. Part of the reason for that is we can prove we are doing “the right thing” - but for this we need your support. Safety is, and always must be, the first priority hence our online Safety Management System (SMS).

You will notice when you signed your membership renewal you agreed

*“** Signing this membership renewal accepts all policies and procedures as outlined in our SMS”*

This entails complying with the rolling stock inspection conditions, the pre run check lists, completing the log book at each use of the loco and for its maintenance and the adherence to speed limits etc. This might be a pain for some but it is essential for our continued operation. I can assure all members that your committee aren't doing this without good reason and we have the interest of our members at heart.

As a result of urgent maintenance of the track, it was necessary to close it for public running in February whilst remediation was undertaken. With a massive effort by a small band of very dedicated members, this work was completed in 5 weeks with 228 tons of ballast being transported, placed and compacted! A truly amazing effort and a demonstration of what can be done if members put their mind (and their backs) to the task. Well done to the team.

As we move further into 2022 I suspect we are going to have interesting times with Covid restrictions. We now have to check vaccination status of all patrons and ensure distancing and or masks are used. This is no doubt going to become more onerous as case numbers increase (which will certainly happen). Just as long as all members remain flexible and make the most of our opportunities, we can ride out the storm. If public running does become impractical then the time can be utilised for more maintenance.

Thank you for all your support in the past year and I'm looking forward to the opportunities presented in the coming year.

Congratulations to the following people...

- ✓ Wendy Weeding on passing her Guard's theory exam in February.
- ✓ Jeff Weeding on passing his Guard's theory exam in February.
- ✓ Luke Depane on passing his Safe Working exam this month.



In addition to the above people we would like to congratulate **John Watson** and **Richard Stuart** who were awarded Life Membership and Member of the Year awards respectively at the recent AGM. Well done both.



CMR Gallery

Photos taken by Anthony Malesic on the 3rd Sunday workday in February.
1st photo: City of canning waiting for the day to start at Niana station
2nd Photo: Luke (mills) Driving Dependable.
3rd Photo: G533 Cooling down while the owner goes and eats lunch.
4th Photo: G533 Ballast Train, waiting to be unloaded.



Below, Richard Stuart (Member of the Year award recipient) hard at work performing inspections.



Concrete works at Niana have resulted in a much improved look in the Station (Photos by Les and Tricia).



CMR Calendar 2022

April	May	June
1 Fr	1 Su Niana Run Day (10.00 start)	1 We Work Day
2 Sa Run Day Prep Work	2 Mo	2 Th
3 Su Niana Run Day (10.00 start)	3 Tu	3 Fr
4 Mo	4 We Work Day	4 Sa Run Day Prep Work
5 Tu	5 Th	5 Su Niana Run Day (10.00 start)
6 We Work Day	6 Fr	6 Mo WA Day (Wilson run TBA)?
7 Th	7 Sa Track Work Day	7 Tu
8 Fr	8 Su Members Day	8 We Work Day
9 Sa Track Work Day	9 Mo	9 Th
10 Su Members Day	10 Tu	10 Fr
11 Mo	11 We Work Day	11 Sa Track Work Day
12 Tu	12 Th	12 Su Members Day
13 We Work/School Hols Run Day/Comm Meeting	13 Fr	13 Mo
14 Th	14 Sa Committee Mtg / Work	14 Tu
15 Fr Good Friday/W'shop Night	15 Su Wilson Run Day	15 We Work Day / Comm Meeting
16 Sa Easter Sat / Work	16 Mo C&S submissions close	16 Th
17 Su Wilson Run Day	17 Tu	17 Fr Workshop Night
18 Mo Easter Monday	18 We Work Day	18 Sa Work
19 Tu C&S submissions close	19 Th	19 Su Wilson Run Day
20 We Work/School Hols Run Day	20 Fr Workshop Night	20 Mo C&S submissions close
21 Th	21 Sa	21 Tu
22 Fr	22 Su	22 We Work Day
23 Sa	23 Mo	23 Th
24 Su	24 Tu	24 Fr
25 Mo ANZAC Day	25 We Work Day	25 Sa
26 Tu	26 Th	26 Su
27 We Work Day	27 Fr	27 Mo
28 Th	28 Sa	28 Tu
29 Fr	29 Su	29 We Work Day
30 Sa Run Day Prep Work/Gen Mtg	30 Mo	30 Th
	31 Tu	

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