



Picton Rail & Sail¹
on the Picton Foreshore
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NEWSLETTER October 2021

Brian Morris, Editor 0211922936

The little engine that could ... **not** stop itself from rolling into Picton Harbour! It's been a little over a month since **our** little trains' "big brother" – a loco that shunts wagons around the yards at Picton - took an unplanned trip into the tide, along with a wagon and two tanks which were attached to it. Fortunately no humans were on



board! It was successfully retrieved a couple of days later, with only a minor impact on our pristine marine environment, and easily-repairable damage to the linkspan between the shore and the (luckily absent) ferry. Normal service resumed a few days later

Speaking of impacts, Covid has certainly made its unwelcome presence felt throughout New Zealand, most especially in Auckland and Waikato/Hauraki. Our sympathy and very best wishes to the folk up north who are still a level behind us. We feel very lucky to have the ultimate safety barrier – Cook Strait – to keep Covid out of the south so far. And kia kaha, Marlborough – we've distinguished ourselves by having the highest vaccination rate in the country so far!



Covid aside, we've lost almost every Sunday this winter to rain and wind. Not only has this disappointed our loyal customers, who have braved poor weather to get out walking on the foreshore – it has also had a disastrous impact on our already fairly modest income. Here's hoping that a lovely

¹ Picton Society of Model Engineers Incorporated

spring, and a return to Level 1, will help us to recoup our losses

Another loss that will hopefully be turned around soon is our usual social schedule. Weekly Quiz Nights at the RSA (but Quiz-Team Leader Brian Morris has been conducting regular “e-practices” with his team), three-weekly drinks at the RSA, monthly-sharing



Sundays at the station, and bi-monthly meals out have all taken a hit, and while we can stay in touch by email, text and phone, waving to each other while wearing masks and keeping the recommended two-metre distance, it's never quite the same. We know

that folk have been regularly looking out for each other's well-being, and in spite of the frustrations, it seems like we are all coming through this pretty well. A tribute to the friendly and caring nature of our community and our Society

Which brings us to three notices, and two upcoming events

Notice 1: *Members may now turn **OFF** the waterfall at the end of their shifts; the leak has been fixed*

Notice 2: *Members please contact **Quentin and Faye Doig** if you can help with occasional clearing up of our grounds – they will call you to let you know when they plan a working bee on the grounds*

Notice 3: *Members please contact **Paul Van Der Werff** if you can help with occasional cleaning of our pond – he will call you to let you know when he plans a working bee on the pool*

Two events: Members please save these dates: **first, Labour Weekend** (Sat 23, Sun 24, Mon 25 Oct). We hope to run each day of this weekend (shifts 11am to 1pm; 1 to 3pm), and, Covid- and weather-willing, plan a gathering at the station, 3-7 pm on Labour Day itself. Members could bring a plate of finger food to share; possibly we could put on a BBQ²; we'll provide tea, coffee, music, and have a catch-up with each other. There is a Committee meeting that evening; as always, all members are invited to attend.

Second, our AGM (Sunday 21 November, 4-7pm, at the RSA). Please read, complete return to the station, a form which will follow this newsletter to (1) confirm your attendance (2) confirm

² Please indicate your interest to the Editor, Brian Morris

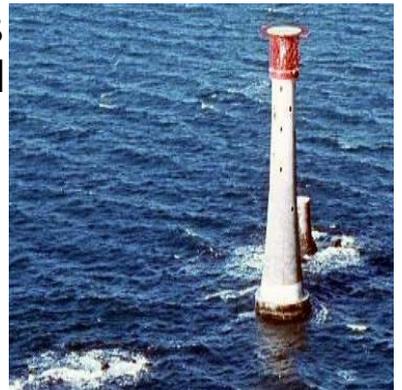
your eligibility to vote (only current financial members are allowed to do so, as per our Constitution) and (3) submit your nominations for Committee Officer positions

STAY CONNECTED, INVOLVED AND COMMITTED TO OUR SOCIETY'S CONTINUATION!

Editor's pick

Longer days, and daylight saving helping those along, focus our minds on light – natural sunshine, torch light, street lights, traffic lights, navigation lights, lighthouses – these all dispense much-needed illumination to dark and potentially dangerous places. Neither Blenheim nor Picton is “blessed” with traffic lights, but our marine traffic in and round the Sounds is rendered safer with the presence of strategically-placed navigation lights. New Zealand, with its long, thin islands, has possibly more than its fair share of rocky shoreline, and mariners both historic and contemporary have appreciated the light that both navigation lights and lighthouses have shed over potentially treacherous waters

There are protocols for us to understand the lights that both trains and sea-going vessels use to avoid danger. Back in 1698 the first (of four) Eddystone lighthouses was built on a rocky base 14km off the coast from Plymouth, England. Initially it shone a paraffin-fueled white light, with a visual range of 17 nautical miles. Later, in 1843, the Belle Tout lighthouse was built atop of the White Cliffs of Dover, near Eastbourne. It also shone a white light, visible 8 nautical miles into the English Channel. Their similarity caused a worrisome confusion to mariners



A replacement lighthouse, comprising 3,600 tons of Cornish granite and 43 metres high, was built in 1902 at Beachy Head, near Eastbourne. Experts conducted tests to see which colours and which types of lenses were the most effective. Concentric Fresnel



*lenses showed that **red** was best, **blue** was worst (it blended into the sky), **white** was too easily dispersed by fog, but **green** had merit. The next modification was to establish each lighthouse's individual trait – the identifiable time-lapse between each*

revolving beam and associated foghorn blasts. Recorded on marine charts, and memorised by mariners, these established which lighthouse was guiding one's way at sea

The connection to trains? As human travel and goods movement by rail increased from the 19th century onwards, train drivers needed signals to tell them when the line ahead was clear. Initially **red** meant STOP and **white** was GO. But ordinary house lights glowing white beside the train tracks were confusing. It was decided that **green** would be GO, and **amber** would replace **white** for CAUTION - easier to distinguish from any other nearby lights. When vehicle numbers increased, and road safety became an issue, traffic lights followed suit

The next modification was arranging traffic lights vertically. This is so drivers could follow changing signals even if the three (strangely, train signal lights can be vertical, at an angle or offset)

President's call

Please be in touch with the Editor about celebrating our birthday/ anniversary on Labour Weekend. Each year is a milestone which deserves recognition. I know we all will be hoping for good weather for that and all other weekends!

*I also encourage you to exercise your membership rights to **attend the AGM, and to nominate, stand and vote for Committee positions.** For me, it's been an amazing experience to serve as President; it's shown me how well-served the Society is, having such talented, dedicated people taking on work that benefits us as a Society, and our local community. Be an active part of helping us to keep the wheels turning!*

Society contacts

President	Bob Metcalf 027 733 1355	Newsletter Editor	Vice President	Treasurer	John Aldridge 021 162 2074
		Brian Morris 021 192 2936	Carol Morris 021 736 3399		
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		Graham Ashford 027 447 0247			