



# The Limited

March, 2020

A newsletter for the model railway clubs in Auckland.

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## Editor's Desk

A comment I have heard many times is that the hobby has to change with the times to remain relevant and to retain a healthy membership. These comments have often led to suggestions such as making the hobby more appealing to younger people, making greater use of social media, and making the hobby cheaper for the new modeller.



One suggestion I have not heard so often is tweaking the annual membership fee for clubs. I was reminded of this yesterday morning as I was walking past the Sunnybrae Bowling Club. This club

has a prominent sign out front that lists the different annual memberships.

A full individual membership is \$200. This is not high given the facilities the SBC offers and maintains. I was then surprised to read that for your first year the \$200 is reduced to \$75, a 63% reduction. An example of an aggressive approach to get members.

A non-trivial portion of Auckland modellers are interested in the activities of two or more clubs but do not belong to all of these clubs. Two or more clubs in Auckland could offer a joint membership. Not all combinations of clubs would work. For example, there are few NZR modellers in Auckland who have a strong interest in garden railways.

Forty-eight years ago, the North Shore MRC decided to enlarge its clubrooms by raising the then one-storied building, see the photograph below



Concrete blocks were laid to form the walls of the ground floor. When the walls had been apparently completed, it was decided that the existing clubrooms needed raising and another row of blocks added. The existing clubrooms was supported at the right end by two I-beams bolted

together. During the raise, some of these bolts sheared and the clubrooms fell. After the dust settled, the NSMRC was left with unusable clubrooms, no money in the bank, and debts.

The club went into overdrive and raised funds from at least six sources. One source was club members paying two or more years membership fees in advance.

My suggestion is that if a club is in a financial bind and does not want to do standard fund raising, the club could ask members to pay two or more years membership and offer a discount. This discount may cause complication two or more years hence, but to get to the long-term you need to get through the short-term.

## Calendar of Events

There is no Calendar of Events because all the schedule events for April and May I would normally list have been cancelled or postponed. I expect the calendar of events in the next issue to be shorter than normal.

## NZAMRC 2020 Convention

The local organizing committee voted after WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic to postpone the convention. This decision was supported by the NZAMRC executive. The local organizing committee have said they will run the re-scheduled convention.

For at least three good reasons at the time, there was great reluctance to cancel the convention. Attendees would likely lose money, a lot of effort had gone into organizing the convention and some of this effort would be wasted, and the NZAMRC would lose money.

My understanding is that Air New Zealand has given many attendees a credit for the full amount of their airfares. There is no word as to how much money the NZAMRC will lose.

Another question is when will the postponed convention be held. Labour weekend this year is nearly seven months away and is a possibility. But this would clash with the 9-mil gathering scheduled for the same weekend in Hastings. The next reasonable possibility is Easter 2021. This would mean holding two national conventions (NZAMRC

and AMRA) about two months apart. Or the convention could be held Easter 2022, a postponement of two years.

I am sure the NZAMRC executive would like people's opinions on when the convention should be held.

## AMRA 2021



As reported in the previous issue of *The Limited*, the next AMRA convention will be Queen's birthday weekend 2021, and based at the Northcote Birkenhead Rugby Union & Sports Club.

A week ago, the local organizing committee met via Google Hangouts for its second meeting. In addition, the first newsletter has been drafted and should be emailed out soon.

## Auckland Garden Railway Society Inc

The AGRSI held its February meeting at Brian Millar's layout. About twenty members attended the meeting which saw the first official runs on Brian's Sunray Light Railway.

Brian joined the AGRSI less than three years ago and has made rapid progress (compared to me!) with the building of his layout.

The two photographs below were supplied by Brian. The first photograph shows Michael Hilliar's Consolidation on passenger duty and the second is a lengthwise view of the 11m long layout.



The AGRSI had planned to host a joint meeting with the New Zealand Gauge 1 group and the Waikato Garden Railway Group on March 14. This was postponed to March 28. This meeting was then postponed for the foreseeable future because of Covid-19 regulations.



Well before the government said New Zealand would be going into lockdown, members of the AGRSI voted on whether to hold the March and April running meetings. Slightly more than half the members excluding the committee voted to continue with the meetings. The majority of the committee thought the meetings should be cancelled and that was the club's final decision.

During the lockdown, one AGRSI club member has started emailing short weekly newsletters to the members. The newsletter covers different aspects of the construction of the writer's layout and is opt-in. Other AGRSI members are providing one-off items.

### Auckland Märklin Club

The AMC was expecting to know by the end of March the outcome of their application to rent part of the old Massey Library. Covid-19 and a request from the police to use the library temporarily for operations means the outcome of the application will not be known for a while.

The AMC held its 2020 AGM in February. Andrew Holt was very keen not to continue as treasurer but no one wanted the role and Andrew graciously agreed to serve as treasurer for one more year.

There was little turnover in the other positions. Barry McCullough continues as president.

A good fraction of the meeting was spent discussing last year's Whangaparaoa Train Show and the Out West Model Expo. Both shows are intended to promote the hobby and to raise money for the AMC.

Although smaller, Whangaparaoa made a bigger profit than the Expo. Another way of stating this is that the Expo made a small profit given its size and the effort put into hosting it. One suggestion on improving the Expo was to move it to another part of Auckland. Other suggestions were to reduce venue costs by holding the show as a pop-up, and not to hold the show next year and redirect the members' efforts elsewhere. No decision was made about either show.

### Auckland MRC

The February meeting was held at Gerard Yates' layout. This was my first visit to the layout. The photograph below was taken from a corner of the room and shows much of the layout.



As many readers will know, Gerard's layout is O gauge and runs DC. The layout has a figure 8 configuration spread over three levels. The considerable amount of track on the layout was hand laid.

My strongest memory from the visit was the two steam locomotive Gerard scratchbuilt in the 1940s. The locomotives are still used. Other memories were the tidy arrangement of the wires under the layout and Gerard's well organized workshop in the garage.

## City of Sails MRC

The photograph below shows five CoSMRC members and one member of the Western Districts MRC assembling a new model for the updated layout at Western Districts.



The meeting was held at the WDMRC late February. I found the meeting very enjoyable and strongly recommend this type of meeting to other clubs if they have not tried it. During the hour and a half meeting we assembled most of a Walthers Cornerstone HO Sanding Tower and Drying House.

We also had a short business meeting. Paul Hobbs stepped down as CoSMRC president and Mike Hill was installed as the new president. Paul asked who would be going to the AR convention in Sydney. Paul and I said yes. This convention has since been postponed to the week after the AMRA convention June, 2021.

## North Shore MRC

The NSMRC held two successful activities in February. The first was a working bee. This concentrated on the outside of the building. About one-third of the club attended and the work was over in time for a barbeque mid-day.

The second activity was an open day. Despite one advert having the wrong address, the open day was very successful compared to recent NSMRC open days. I am unsure what caused this improvement – changing from Sunday to Saturday, the wet weather, or the fact there had not been an open day for several months? The photograph shows a member of the public fascinated with Thomas running on one of the club's portable layouts.



## Auckland Nine Mil Group

I attended the March meeting of the group. There was a good turnout with seven members present. John Whyte outlined to me the upgrade he and others plan to do to the station in the photograph below.



## Classified Ad

Free to a good home, New Zealand Railfan magazine from 1994 to latest. Winner takes all!! Please contact me on 09 534 9317 or 0274 850 727 (Colin Zeff).

## Contact Details

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