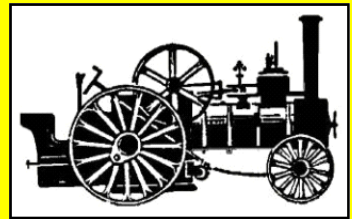


A Wisp of



STEAM SUPREME

Extracts from the Melbourne Steam
Traction Engine Club Newsletter



Membreys Franna moving our 20 T TBM to
make room for the rail mounted steam crane .



Steam Shovel Update



Des Life Member



Orlando's Donation

“Get a FRANNA “

With all the heavy lifting going on due to the arrival of the Cerberus machinery and steam shovel restoration that call could be heard around the club yet no one seemed to know what a Franna really was .

Thanks to information supplied by Aaron Morris we can set them straight while at the same time provide a bit of background to yard cranes over the years.

Got in for the unloading was Membrey's → Cranes very impressive brand new top of the line 40 tonne Franna . Complete with monogram it confirms it was a 60 birthday present for the boss Craig Membrey



Aaron suggested “ Franna would make an interesting story for Steam Supreme as early pick and carry cranes were based on attachments to tractors or back of truck conversions where the Franna was a true Australian development in it's own right”.

As a bit of Background lets take a look at some snap shots of the type of yard crane being used long before the Franna . Many of these were often based on surplus WW2 blitz (German for lightening !) army trucks .

The scariest I have seen was this Blitz with its fixed wooden boom → and pendants and a running rope . No doubt cobbled up on a farm or sawmill but fortunately now retired . Warwick pic



← One step better was this cable jib more professionally set up on a WW2 Ford Blitz buggy , evolving in the right direction
It would have had very poor manoeuvrability and vision but still would be mighty handy.



The first crane capable of real work that I drove was used for putting up tobacco sheds. It had

a hydraulic jib mounted on a cut down Stuart Army tank . Very nice to use because the tracks made a stable base that confirmed to irregularities in the grounds surface . The main drawback was no slewing which meant going back and forth while trying to screw around . I have got a slide of it somewhere . Although this is not actually the crane we had it gives the idea of surplus military



Wantirna 1988

→ equipment conversions .

This one is based on a shortened Australian Cruiser tank and was, I believe used building the Warrnambool break water.



Warwick Pic

Over the years the club has had quite a variety of cranes all based on tractors, fairly useless being kero or Diesels that were hard to start .

← This Massey Harris with Fowler hydraulic conversion was from Wantirna days. Petrol / kero prone to petrol blockages , fouling sparkplugs and getting stuck in gear and doubtful brakes .

The big breakthrough for us was this big Conquip Chamberlain tractor based machine with Perkins diesel engine and running rope and 10 tonne max on the short hook .

It came from AH Plant , thanks to Peter Morris and is still giving us good service. With it's long length, articulated steering to slew and long boom it is not very manoeuvrable and can be unstable when travelling on uneven surfaces . Very handy in the right hands. I recently heard it referred to as an old wobbly legs !



The favourite at MSTEC is our 2.9 tonner BHB from WA TRACTORS with extendable boom based on a very reliable Chamberlain tractor. Found to be very useful and manageable but requires outriggers for anything other than boom straight ahead .



Now for the evolution of the Specialist Franna

My first encounter with real site mobile cranes was on a hydro project in Scotland in 1971.

We had a "wee Coles" yard crane similar to the internet one pictured right . Based on a Ford D series mechanicals it's rear steering gave good manoeuvrable on site but got the speed wobbles on the road. Coles folded in the late '70 s .

Extremely handy for work involving moving equipment around on the site. Heavy lifting and erection was done by in situ derricks which gave some exciting bucket rides down the shaft "on the brake" .

The Loch Ness wee Coles ended in tears when an inexperienced driver was asked to lift a drilling rig out of the vertical surge shaft prior to blasting. He had seen it done many times but very soon had the crane head first down the shaft . He forgot to retract the boom ! He was instantly sacked but the foreman who orderd him to do it survived !

Now we come to Franna

Aaron pointed me to the Franna and Membrey's websites for most of the following information.

This pic from the Franna web site , although not captioned leaves the impression it was their first crane , not too dissimilar to the Coles .



Historical Overview key points from Franna website

- 1978 - Dave Francis develops the very first pick and carry crane from truck components.
- 1986 - Business sold to Brian Hain and Lou Parolin who later form Franna Cranes Pty Ltd
- Franna comes from "Francis and Anna" which is the family name of the company founder and his wife.
- 1999 - Franna is acquired by Terex Corporation .
- Craig Hain, son of Brian Hain continues to represent the Franna brand in Australia today although the company is now owned by Terex an American company
- Franna cranes can now be found working in over 30 countries.

Over the years, the term "Franna" has become synonymous with any pick-and-carry crane, reinforcing the manufacturer's success and legacy.

There you go they are an Australian development , with a name like that I thought they may have been German. Ed.

It goes on to advise

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For over 40 years, Franna® has been the market leader in the design and manufacture of quality pick and carry cranes. Their cranes live up to their name with the strength and easy operation to pick up heavy loads and the steering flexibility to move in tight spaces. Their high road speeds get them to the jobsite quickly, and because the articulated frame needs no outriggers, you can get set up and working almost immediately.

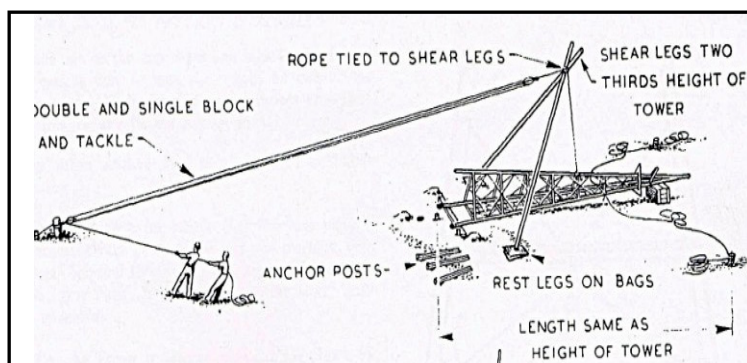
They are now owned by American company Terex. (This was a General motors company formed out of Euclid . In America this was forced to be hived off by US Governments anti monopoly laws in late 1980s) however the Australian and Scottish branches being outside USA stayed with General Motors Ed)

Now we get to where we started Craig Membrey's 60 th birthday present.

A spectacularly painted T40-2 Franna . Flagship of the pick and carry cranes incorporating the latest technology with engineering excellence. With a huge maximum lift capacity of 40 tonne The 3-axle design eliminates the need for a removable counterweight and the third axle control system raises axle 3 when operating on a work site, providing similar turning circle as the smaller 25 tonner. Maximum road speeds of up to 80km/h allows the operator to move swiftly and safely from job to job. Additional features include a full width isolated cabin, articulating counterweight and increased cabin storage and power boost to 230 kw from it's MB engine.

Also as standard is Franna's patented Dynamic LMI which automatically continuously calculates the maximum safe lift taking into account any changes in chassis articulation forward and side stability and boom configuration which of course is always changing when moving around an undulating site . This way the driver always has instant information of the what the machine can safely handle. Franna web site

The old way , raising a windmill by man power through a block and tackle and shear legs or a gin pole . Southern Cross Instructions Manual.



No wonder anyone who has a site crane likes to (correctly or otherwise) leave the impression it is a Franna.
Warwick Thanks to Aaron Morris for kicking off this interesting story.

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Around the Club



Rohan Lamb writes :- Here are the photos from the November social meeting presentation by Vice President Neil Myers to Des Lang of his life membership

He joined in 1967 not far off 58 years ago and only 4 years after our club was formed.



Also included is this photo from 1969 at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology when removing machinery from the RMIT Thermo Lab .

The late Wally Vears is leaning on the flywheel while not doing much physically he was a keen preservationalist and had a major role in acquiring the Willans air blast Diesel engine .



Another early photo of Des is in Bill McKinnon's Dandenong Engineering Works yard in 1972 . An early meeting and restoration venue. Both photos taken by Dave Mickle information from Rohan Lamb



Both photos taken by Dave Mickle information from Rohan Lamb

Life membership is not given out lightly by the MSTEC and there seems to be no specific criteria other than a long association and significant contribution to the betterment of the club .

Des's obviously involvement in the acquisition of redundant steam machinery in the days when it was seen as valueless and being removed for scrap is significant.

Also perhaps a turning point for the club was his arranging for us to receive Charitable Status as a not for profit organization . This has greatly raised our standing and legitimacy in the eyes of authorities and the public which has seen us recipients of donations of money , artefacts and grants and helped with tenure of land . In retrospect this has been a significant factor in our success. For example Des's work making it possible for donations to us be claimed as a tax deduction directly led to us getting the White steam Car . By donating it to us Warren Hicks , I believe was able to offset his income tax by \$ 56 k ! with the result we got the car for nothing . Likewise the donation of petrol- electric loco Joy by John Davies led to it being named after his wife . Thanks Des.

Other current life members are 1977 Alan Robert . He was an early president in the steam artefact acquisition period who recognized the opportunity only existed for a fleeting moment in history and had to be grabbed or forever lost . Reg Murton 1999 played a major roll in us acquiring the Scorseby site , and Peter Morris 2008 for his contribution to developing and maintaining the grounds in the terrific condition you see today . I see bestowing life membership is a way an organization can acknowledge the value it puts on it's volunteers. Without volunteers we are nothing Apart from this recognition the only tangible benefit is they do no longer have to pay annual membership . Some continue to give it as a donation . Ed.



A Wonderful Gesture

Here is a note and photo that certainly made our train crews day the other Sunday . As you know maintaining and operating the train is entirely done by volunteer labour so something like this that shows how their efforts are appreciated is a great thrill and makes it all feel worthwhile. Sophie, Orland's mum wrote us

" John Meade passed me your Steam Supreme email address to send over a few photos that I captured when Orlando was donating the coins from his birthday party.

For his 5 th birthday party, the little man made a good choice not to take gifts from the guests. Instead, he asked everyone for a gold coin donation to the steam engine centre so that 'they could invent new things for us to enjoy' .

These are a couple of snapshots from the video I took, feel free to use either (or both) of them in the newsletter.

All the best! Regards, Sophie "

John Meade accepts Orlando's donation in a special little box he made up for the purpose watched by John Mills and several of the party children .



Not everyone may appreciate MSTEC offers special Children's Birthday Party facilities where for a very modest \$10 per child they get unlimited train rides and use of the BBQ and picnic tables and access to the tram . Arrangements are handled by Brad Hector who, with complete reliability handles booking , makes sure they know the ropes and checks everything is in order for the day . Most weekends there is one and sometimes 2 parties which nicely supplements the regular passenger takings.

Steam Shovel

For a while things went a bit flat while waiting for an outlook on the sandblasting but now with the expectation of early in the new year there has been a surge of activity.

Meanwhile the clubs hydraulic press has been used to straighten the damaged edge of the right-hand water tank floor plate .

The Diesel section on seeing what was going on came over to help Warwick. Len Brighton and Ian Malcolm soon had it back in order but by no means looking new as in line with the clubs policy that preservation should take precedence over restoration if possible particularly if it tells a story of it' working life.



Pressure washing to remove concealed grease has taken Aaron many going-over's .

Warwick is needle gunning heavy scale out of corrosion pockets in the back of the dipper.



The regular volunteers have collectively spent hundreds of hours of their own time , particularly over the Christmas break , getting things ready for the Sandblaster. Given the special skills and equipment these members bring

to this and others jobs , the club must benefit to the tune of up to \$ 1000 per day each .

There is a feeling by some that in these cases it would be good to find a better balance between what these members contribute and the amenity they get out of the club . ! Ed .



All the components have been laid out in groups and on stands , thanks to Aaron and others in anticipation of the Sandblaster coming this week .

Pressure is full on with Aaron doing the final washing using Robert Jones's extra high pressure Diesel powered machine . It does a wonderful job of removing any grease and oil which the sand would otherwise just stick to .

Aaron spent over 8 hours at the last minute reprofiling a replacement sprocket tooth . The blank had been poorly made leaving it excessively oversize. Grinding it back had been hanging fire since being welded on in May.



Andrew Fairweather juggled work commitments to get down and help tape up areas of the machinery such as slides , gears and bearings that needed protection from sandblasting



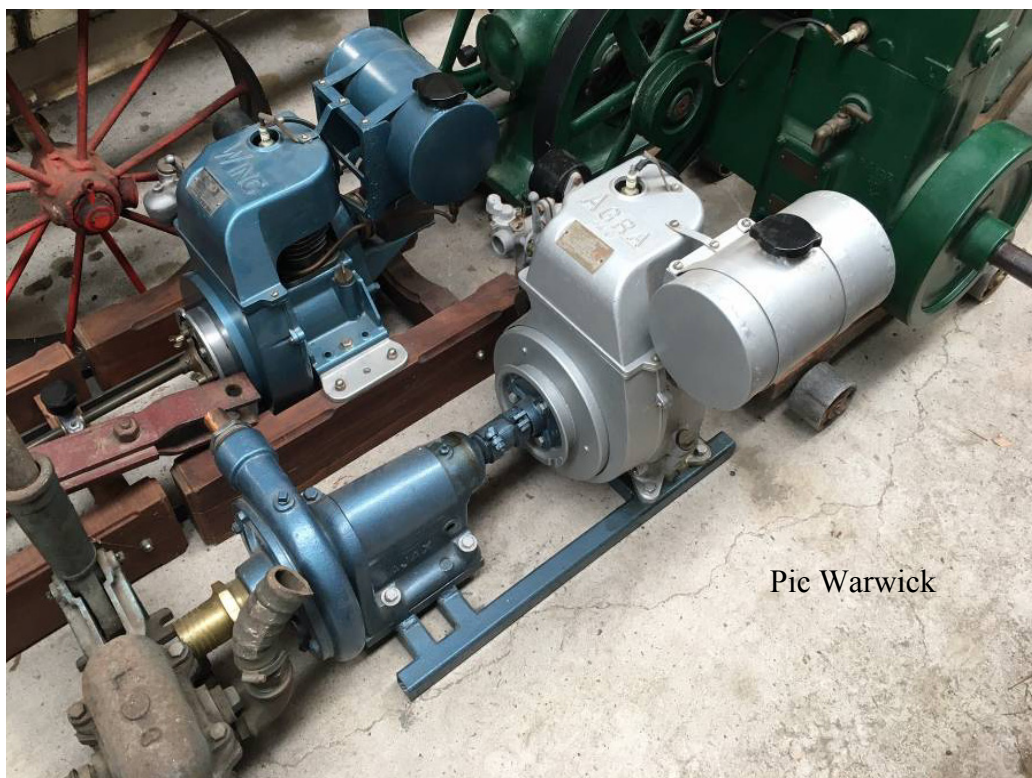
Wing Tool and Gauge Engine

A preview of the some of Stationary engines that have been donated to the club from the Wing Tool Gauge and Instruments Company in Burwood rd Hawthorn . They made their own high quality small aircooled stationary engines predominantly for propelling small boats and driving pumps .

The donated ones have been assembled from surplus old stock parts.

Also in the collection is a number of other stationary engines his father has restored including a couple driving 32 volt generators and lights.

Michael Stapmanns will tell us the full story of this important local 1950's manufacturer in the Feb Steam Supreme.



Pic Warwick



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Coming Events

SOCIAL MEETING

1st January 2025

Regular Events :-

MSTEC Social meetings, 8 pm Scoresby. First Wednesday of each month .

Museum open every **Thursday, Saturday and Sunday** . Miniature Train running every Sunday 11 am to 4 pm

Museum Machinery in action. Last Sunday of each month **Except end of year December.**