

NZAMRC Model Competitions

I've just been reading about this year's Coast to Coast race. The winner, Hamish Elliot, ran, biked and kayaked the 243km from Kumara on the West Coast to New Brighton in Christchurch in 10 hours, 48 minutes, 53 seconds – a journey that takes over three hours to drive or nearly four hours by TranzAlpine train!

How do they do it, these amazing people? And why?

As someone who has tried to maintain reasonable fitness the how still eludes me. The why is something else again. No doubt each entrant has a different motivation. One would be that it gives a sense of purpose, something to aim at.

To win the race would be incredible, but just to take part must be really special too. With some 900 entrants, and even with numerous event categories, very few can hope for official recognition. They know that just to do it is something they will never forget.

Modellers are not athletes

As railway modellers, physical feats are a long way down our priorities, but we can still challenge ourselves. The convention model competitions provide one such challenge.

Who in their heart of hearts does not want to make the best models they can – the best locomotive, carriage, wagon, scene or whatever? But we're human and sometimes wanting is not enough, we need a focus, a deadline, and something bigger than ourselves to make the extra effort seem worth it.

Posting on Facebook is one way, or YouTube, or even a magazine article, but convention model competitions are almost unique in offering an objective assessment of our efforts.

That objectivity of course comes at a cost. Entrants must complete a quite detailed entry form, the information from which later becomes densely printed pages of details of each entry for each judge.

Not mind readers

We'd love to make it simpler but judges who are also mind readers are hard to find.

The only other way to minimise errors and uncertainties is to provide the judges with comprehensive information, and we can only get that from the entrants. The online entry form (<https://form.jotform.com/233187758058064>) would look daunting if printed out, running to some 10 pages depending on the type of entry and the details provided. But it isn't printed, you just scroll down and it doesn't seem that long. Most of it is tick boxes. I've timed myself at 10 minutes, some might take a bit longer, but not much. But there is a but — we really want entrants to supply extra explanatory material such as prototype photos, plans or notes. Not too much, two pages max, but this will usually take a bit of time to prepare for uploading with the entry form. All common file formats are supported, like jpg, pdf, tif, png, etc.

Please enter early

That sounds like a lot for the judges to digest? It does. Which is why the date for entries to be in is April 12, two weeks before the convention. That will give the judges time to absorb all the information so when they actually see the entries they will already know the background.

Can you enter after April 12? Yes you can but there will be a \$10 late fee and we really will appreciate it if you

can enter earlier.

Call for judges

Finally, we are now making a first call for people to be judges. As you can see, this task isn't easy, but it is also something of a privilege and a chance to really get close to a whole spectrum of the country's best models.

It does take time — it's hard to estimate just how long — but it should be possible to do most if not all of it without missing other programmed activities.

Please seriously consider volunteering by emailing to petrosnz15@gmail.com, questions/queries also welcome.

Prospective judges can read some guidelines here: <http://tinyurl.com/mryrkb2b>

Thinking of entering? You will find useful information here: <http://tinyurl.com/3k9v6jw4>

- Peter Ross
- Chair NZAMRC Competition Committee



A feature this year will be the Finish Only section where only the painting and other finishing work is judged. The main criterion is what the entrant was aiming to achieve. This does require clear information about what that was, such as prototype photos or a clear description.



The origins of the competitions were scratchbuilds, and there's still a place for those. This bungalow built by Gordon Barr is a good example.



Brendon Lean built this kit-based model of a KiwiRail DH class loco, adding details and his own modifications including shunter's refuges.

(All photos Peter Ross)