

Volume 14 - Issue 5

Established 1965

September 2020

Pukemiro Junction

T H E G L E N A F T O N L I N E



Back in action - August Open Day (Photo: Elliot Baptist)

SEPTEMBER 2020 OPEN DAY CANCELLED

GREETINGS

Welcome to another BTC newsletter. We were partly over Covid 19 until it reared its ugly head again a couple of weeks ago. This has come mainly to Auckland & we have decided to cancel our September Open Day. We can't distance our passengers in the carriages & we would have to ensure that we kept the number of visitors under 100 & collect full details for contact tracing. A lot of our working members come from the Auckland region potentially leaving us short of staff to operate an Open Day. We will keep members informed as to general developments & also opportunities to help the Club via email.

TRAINING

On 27/9/20 and depending on virus developments we potentially have a charter trip in the morning & then after lunch we hope to hold a training session on the overhauling & testing of Westinghouse brakes. All members are invited to come along and learn from this exercise.

2020 OPEN DAYS

The July Open Day was very well attended by our passengers. Weather on the day was very fine. 401 was not available due to a problem with the torque converter, so we ran the Peckett & Meremere 402 all day over the full length of the line. Unfortunately, the coal wasn't the best being full of rock & slack, so the train didn't always make it to the top end.

The August Open Day was very quiet, in fact the quietest day for 4 years. This time Meremere 401 had been fixed (thanks Pete C), & together with Meremere 402 they hauled 2 cars on the top half of the line while the Peckett ran on the lower half hauling the mines car. This meant the Peckett had to run around the train at each end of its trips.

The Mamaku jigger was in use both days & was very busy during the July Open Day.

Thanks to all who turn up & help make these days a success.



Visitors from Te Kauwhata enjoy the July Open Day (Photo: Linda Cooper)

Our café staff of Russell, Sue, Lesley, Karleen & Trev work wonders keeping our passengers & members fed & watered.

See our website www.bushtramwayclub.com or our “The Glen Afton Line” facebook page for more details of our events. All assistance, however small, is very welcome.

CHARTER GROUPS

Because of Covid 19, we had to cancel a charter on 15/8 but have plenty more charters planned for late September, hopefully the present Covid restrictions will be over by then.

SICK LIST

Rob B cut his left hand on a saw and Bruce McC has been in hospital for a few days & is off work for a few weeks. John S got knocked off his bike recently. We hope you are all recovering & hope to see you back at the Junction soon. A safe recovery is hoped for to any other members on the “sick list”. Our condolences to the Swabey family on the death of Colin’s father. Although not a member, he came over at least twice a year during Open Days.

ALONG THE LINE

Growth: Dave M continues to battle with the lineside growth & weeds around the railway.

Old Hall: Maarten R has been clearing out the hall, assisted by Ian J, Dave M, Pete C & a few others. The hall is just about empty now. Dave M continues to sort out most of the large supply of bolts that were in the hall.



Dave M cleans up bolts rescued from the Hall (Photo E. Baptist)

Lawns: The lawns & driveway are kept under control by Dave M, Russell W. & Maarten R.

AROUND THE JUNCTION

Scrap: Largely as a result of the clean out of the hall, we sent away another skip of scrap metal & have a quantity of old rails still to go. Ian J has taken a load of scrap brass & copper to Auckland & sold that as well.

Gardens: After the AGM, Patricia A stayed back a few hours & worked on our gardens. Maarten has also done some gardening.

The siding into the shed behind the woodwork shop: Pete C, Ian J & Dave M spent part of a day sorting out the sleepers under this siding. On the books at present is the need to eventually lengthen this shed to the full length of the woodwork shop. Ian J & Pete C are in charge of this project.

Eftpos machines: A major problem surfaced at the start of July Open Day. No eftpos machines would work. We have two of these, one in the ticket office & the other in the café. John S tried to get them working and eventually got the one in the café working but the one in the ticket office had had it. We gave all passengers who needed to use this our bank account number & most if not all have paid up.

John S tried out a replacement machine after the AGM & we used it successfully during the August Open Day.

CAFÉ AWNING

Bruce assisted by Geoff T, Ian B, Russell & a few others have been busy on the shelter being erected in front of the rec room. The framework is in place.



The new awning takes shape. (Photo: E. Baptist)

LOCOMOTIVES

1) Diesel

Tr 436: This was purchased on behalf of the Club some months ago but the motor was in bits in the cab, supposedly with a blown head gasket but we were told it could be worn rings. It would probably cost \$30,000 to overhaul.

Ian Jenner comments: “The locomotive TR436 was one of a group of small N.Z. Railways shunting locomotives. It was one of a batch of 9 built by A. & G. Price Ltd (their number 207) in 1963 as TR110, with the number changed in 1979. It was fitted with a Gardner 6LW engine and Twin Disc torque converter. Weight in service 15444 kilograms. Sold by Kiwirail to the Bush Tramway Club in August 2019, with the engine dismantled. The loco will be cleaned and painted when time, money, & manpower are available. A running Gardner 6LWB engine to replace the one in the loco has been bought. It came out of a Leyland bus in Scotland which was going to be restored but the owner discovered the chassis was so badly rusted the bus could not be repaired. The engine is due to arrive in Auckland towards the end of September, & hopefully it will not be too big a task to remove the old engine & install the replacement.”



Scottish bus engine...Photo: Courtesy I. Jenner

Tr 367: We have a CW person working at the Junction 1 day a week. His present job is replacing a small section of the cab side that was badly rusted. Kiwirail would call it “derusting” His next job is to straighten the rear running board. He is supervised by either Dave M or myself (C. Jenner).



Repair work to Tr105(367) – (Photo E. Baptist)

2) Steam: (notes by Chris Mann)

Peckett,

This loco is running well and performed well at the August Open Day. There are ongoing maintenance tasks including minor adjustments, repairing minor defects, cleaning of tubes and cleaning the loco that keeps us busy for about a day a month outside of the Open Days. We would welcome any help with these tasks.

We have recently purchased 25 litres of steam oil from Morris Oils UK. This is oil specifically formulated for steam loco lubricators.

The Peckett has made a number of celebratory entries into Glen Afton this year. On the July Open Day, we figured out that this was the first steam hauled, regularly scheduled train to arrive in Glen Afton for 55 years (the last was probably around 1965). The locals have been out to see the Peckett arrive on several occasions, and take many photos.

Heisler Loco

Work is progressing on the Heisler loco, with some good milestones achieved this year. The Club received a quotation from Alastair MacIver to complete the repairs on the Heisler boiler. The scope of the repairs has been agreed with the boiler inspector. In parallel with raising the money to repair the boiler, work continues on the rest of the loco.

The boiler has been lifted clear of the boiler mounts, ready to remove from the loco. Fittings have been removed from the loco, and blanks have been prepared for the boiler fittings. Dave has cut into the water tank and cleaned the inside of the tank in preparation for painting. There are some localised thin areas that need repairing, otherwise the tank is fine to reuse. The tank is being modified with a coal bunker being added.

When the boiler has been removed, the frame is to be cleaned, inspected for cracks, and painted. Other tasks include bogie removal and headstock replacement.

Climax loco

Alastair MacIver returns in November to complete some minor welding on the boiler. A set of new firebars arrived in July. It is hoped that the boiler can be successfully hydro tested later this year, prior to being trucked to Te Kuiti to rejoin the loco frame.

Work continues on the rest of the loco sitting in John Pitcorn's workshop in Te Kuiti. The timber for the cab floor was machined last week, ready for fitting to the frame. The water tank/bunker steel has been cut and rolled for the corners, ready for welding.

When the boiler arrives towards the end of the year, we will have a near complete loco, with completed frame, engine unit and bogies, boiler, cab and bunker. There remains a lot of work to complete the loco including boiler cladding, pipework and fittings. Good progress.

ROLLING STOCK

A 1477: Rob B has been working on this carriage, as well as assisting Trevor T4 with improvements to the Public Address system.

A.G.M.

This was held towards the end of July. The committee is the same except Bruce didn't stand again. We owe a big vote of thanks to him for the length of time he has been on the committee either as Vice Chairman, Chairman or on the committee itself. The meeting was well attended by 21 members. Nothing contentious came up. A review of our Constitution was read out & put to the meeting & passed. It is mainly to reduce the size of the committee.

Thanks, Russell for putting on a light lunch & to Marleen for baking the cake & biscuits.

NZTA VISIT

Safety case & safety system: The major item from NZTA's annual assessment was that we don't review either of these documents often enough. Richard E undertook this massive job & reviewed both these documents, and the Risk Assessment/ Mitigation documents. This also meant a new section to our safety system & a safety case alteration had to be created saying what & how often we would review these documents. These have all been accepted by NZTA.

RAIL TRUCKS/JIGGERS

Ian J has recently purchased another of Ollie Smith's rail trucks that worked at Mamaku on Gammons tramway. This one was used for hauling logs & has a 3 wheeled arrangement on both sides at the rear, the wheels each side being linked together by chains. He has obtained a new cab & the underframe has been delivered to his warehouse in Mangere. He has just about finished stripping the chassis down ready for it to go away for sand blasting. He found it on a farm close to Mamaku.

Ian J comments:

“You might be aware I have talked for many years about getting one of Ollie Smith's chain-drive machines & in particular the 5-axle one that was at the Tauranga Museum. Last week I received a phone call advising that this machine

was on a farm at Mamaku & might be available. Marlene & went down there last Saturday & sure enough there it was, sitting on rails in a paddock. The farmer Harry Frost said it had gone from Tauranga to Waihi Railway but was not used there & Harry saw it when they were considering scrapping it. As Harry had seen it in operation & even driven it he decided it had to be saved & so he purchased it with the aim of restoring it & laying track at his Mamaku blueberry orchard & farm, but that never happened. I managed to persuade him to sell it to me, & then his son offered to arrange transport to Auckland which happened during the first week of August.

The search then began to find a cab, bonnet & grille for it, & several phone calls later I located these in Tauranga & have done the deal to purchase them. The next requirement is an engine & Trade-me has produced a Holden 202 which should be suitable, & that is on the way to Auckland.

The chassis & running gear is at my warehouse & we have started cleaning it ready for sandblasting & painting, & then we will get on to work on the mechanicals. Time will tell what work is necessary but hopefully before too long we will have another bush tramway rail vehicle at Pukemiro.”



The rail tractor seen in Tauranga in 1978 (Photo: courtesy of Ian Jenner)

This newsletter was produced by Richard Ellis, with most of the text from Colin Jenner. It is heartening that there is increasing text input from others. Photos are still needed. Send your contributions for future editions (including images/photos) to secretary@bushtramwayclub.com.