

“I often wished I had the time to cultivate modesty...” - Edith Sitwell

Volume 16 - Issue 3

Established 1965

May 2022

Pukemiro Junction

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



Maarten surveys the newly laid line at the top of the yard— April 2022 (T. Willmot)

GREETINGS & WELCOME TO ANOTHER BTC NEWSLETTER

THE MAY 1st OPEN DAY IS GOING AHEAD!

The BTC is finally back in action on Sunday 1st May 2022, this being the first since August 2021. Come along and make a day of it...all welcome...

OPEN DAYS, CHARTER TRIPS & GROUP VISITS

Open days: Cancellation of these has been a continuing story however we re-open on May 1st. We had to cancel our March & April Open Days largely because Covid 19 was rife in the area & also so we could concentrate on various site matters (of which more below).

Charter trips: We had one on 21/4 & an enquiry for another one. Both of these groups are senior citizens.

Group visits: For the May Open Day a group of car enthusiasts are coming & also a dog group in the afternoon.

Recently other groups have begun to show interest to either attend an Open day or organise a charter trip. This is welcome after months of lockdowns etc..

AGM

AGM: This was held on 27/3/22 & attended by 15 members. The committee is exactly the same as last year. Nothing out of the ordinary was brought up & the meeting closed at 2.05pm.

SHUNTING REFRESHER COURSE

Shunting refresher course: This was attended by 15 members & was held in the morning before the AGM. Our shunting signals were gone through & demonstrated. There was a very good discussion on safety while shunting & the need for the shunter & loco driver to both know exactly what is intended & be in view of each other.

ACTIVITIES / DEVELOPMENTS

Trev T4 & Rob B have been back & fitted the new step down transformer to the radio in 401.

Dave M has split some of the rings from the pine trees up the line into firewood. If you need firewood for this winter, it will cost you \$100 a trailer load. There are still a lot of rings to be split up.

WOODWORK SHOP LEAN-TO

CJ comments: Ian J tells me he has been down at the Junction for 26 days (Ed: probably more now!) since just before Xmas. A lot of the time has been spent working on this shed. In recent months the side walls were constructed, the doors fitted and the roof commenced.

There was an issue getting the correct roof material but that was overcome.



Work on the roof of the lean-to (I. Jenner)

Ian J adds to this:

Pleased to report that yesterday (17/4) the roof was completed on the lean-to behind the woodwork shop; this gives us an additional 22.5 metres of

undercover rail storage. We will be able to store the 2 Mamaku jiggers, the new Ngaroma/Ngongotaha jigger, the Union Foundry, the excavator & the loader all out of the weather. Workers on the job have been Pete C, John S, Dave M, Bruce McL, Colin J, Maarten R, Ian J, with the help of Marlene M who supplied regular nourishment & tea.

Spouting & downpipe plus 2 flashings left to do to totally complete the shed.

Ed note: We should also recognise the efforts of Trevor T4 and his team & also Richard S in laying the curvaceous siding & constructing the pointwork to make this project possible in the first place.

OLD HALL SITE

The crib wall has been completed. The local construction & demolition dump supplied us with Moxy truck loads of fireclay overburden from their dump. Each one brought 20m³ & there were 8 loads. Unfortunately, they couldn't get close enough to dump the loads where it was needed, so they dumped it in the corner of the carpark.

Ian J & Pete C spent many hours shifting it with our loader. The bucket of this holds ½m³ so multiply 8 x 20 x ½ = 320 trips to shift it into the required area. John S spent some time in the early stages of filling the hole pushing the overburden into place & compacting it at the same time.

Russell W has spent some time since smoothing the surface but it needs more.



The digger placing spoil where the hall used to be (Russell Webb)

Ian J comments about just a part of this project:

On Friday we got another 3 Komatsu dumper loads of fill delivered by Green Gorilla; I managed to move & spread 1 load on Friday & then on Saturday PC & Bruce M came to complete the last 2 loads. PC drove our loader while Bruce M spread & compacted it. Bruce is far more experienced on the excavator than I am & was able to get a flatter surface. It was a long day of backwards & forwards for both but the end result is the old hall site is filled & roughly levelled & compacted. We will let it settle for a short while & then complete the levelling & decide how to finish the surface before moving huts etc. The loader is designed for people of smaller stature than Pete or I & so we are extremely cramped while driving it. The whole has certainly been an interesting challenge, emptying the old hall before demolishing it, removing all the old building materials, to now having a useful flat area; the work has involved a number of club members.



Moxy dumping spoil in the carpark (M. Rekke)

AROUND THE JUNCTION

Gardens: The weeds don't stop growing. Keeping the gardens tidy has been done by Russell W, Maarten & Lesley R.

Russell W has just about finished tidying up & painting the welcome sign near the top of the driveway. It is one of the headstocks from steam crane 256.

Russell W has continued to keep the lawns mowed & has spent a couple of days weed eating around the trees beside the driveway.

Dave M & CJ recently spent half a day trimming overhanging small trees down the lower end of the line.

Bruce McL recently repaired a section of external cladding on Richard E's hut. Thanks to Ian J for supplying left over planks from the "new hut" project for this work.

LEVEL CROSSING AT THE TOP OF THE YARD

This gives access to the dump & has a lot of heavy traffic across it. A working bee was held on 6/3 & the main job was to remove the rails from the area where they wanted to extend the concrete area of the crossing. This meant the removal of 6 track sets, dismantle them, then shift the rails after they were numbered with their position.

The dump staff decided to do most of the job themselves but didn't have spare staff available. They were to supply the replacement sleepers but when they went & had a look for them, they had all vanished except one. So we are supplying the sleepers from our stockpile of new ones but the dump are to reimburse us the cost of replacing them. Approx. 60 are needed.

The sleepers that we were able to get at without tearing up the roadway were removed a few days later.

We were told late in the week ending 9/4 that the dump had sorted out the base where our track was to be laid back on so it could hook up with the existing track at both ends. Pete C sent out an emergency call to a lot of members to come & relay the track, ready for the dump to concrete the area in the next week. (Ed: concreting since done).

We got started at approx. 9.00am on the Saturday although Pete C & John S were already up there & busy. We took up 40 new sleepers & assorted track fittings & got stuck into laying out the new sleepers. By the end of the day, we had most of the rails in place & a large area spiked down.

The next day, we continued spiking the rails to the sleepers & got two replacement rails to replace the rather bent ones. One of the rails needed 50mm cutting off it & then a new fishplate bolt hole creating in the rail. We completed the job around lunch time.

Those who helped with this job were Pete C, John S, Ian B, Trev W, Dave M, Maarten R, Bill R-W, Colin J & others. Thanks to you all.

We made extremely good progress for a group of "older members" but not to the stage of the builders of railways in USA where they regularly laid 1 mile of track a day!!.



Early work lifting the old track (T. Willmot)

Pete C comments: I would like to say thanks to participants for your hard work over the weekend to get the track reinstated across the Pukemiro Colliery road crossing, without your efforts it would not have happened.

For the record, we installed 48 sleepers, 8 rails two of which were replacements from the originals, 20 fishplates, 8 track screws and 184 track spikes.



The new track at the crossing (P. Cairncross)



The finished, concreted job. (P. Cairncross)

CYCLONE

Cyclone: The cyclone that went down the west coast of NZ recently fortunately didn't do much damage to us. The very strong winds partly blew the roof off the track wagon & brought down a few very small trees. It also broke the top off a pine tree in the block just down from the Junction. A few of the trees on the edge of this block seem to have a bit more of a lean on them now.

We expected a lot more trees down but thankfully that didn't happen.

Dave M & Maarten R cleaned up these trees.

TRACTOR

Tractor: Richard S has got the tractor going again after fitting a new alternator. He had to wait a month to get a pulley for the front couriered across Auckland!!

N.Z.T.A.

The NZTA visited us on 30/3 for their annual assessment of the BTC. They were at the site for around 3 hours & were mainly interested in our training & track inspection paper work. Their scope for this visit included:

- Risk Management – Governance and Culture.
- Hazard management – Risk identification and controls.

HEISLER 1082 FUND

Work on the Heisler boiler progresses at Paekakariki: the new tubes have been fitted to the boiler in record time. Alastair is now undertaking the repair & refitting of the handhole doors, the washout plugs, the dome cover and will also blank off the various other boiler openings & orifices. It should soon be possible to check the boiler for leaks/ pressure test it.

It may seem like magic that the boiler is being fast-tracked, but make no mistake that every dollar is welcome to complete the job. If you are able to, please send a donation, however small, to the BTC bank account.



Heisler tubes in position at the smokebox end (Alastair McIvor)

LOCOMOTIVES

Steam Locos: The Peckett & Cb locos have both been inspected by the boiler inspector. The open inspection were carried out on 17/3 & the in steam inspections on 6/4. Both passed OK.

Those who did the work on them were Richard S, Chris M, Dave M & John S.

New bush jigger: We have recently had donated by a couple of members another bush jigger. It arrived on 27/3. This one was built by National Timber Co of Ngongotaha in 1935 & used by them to take workmen out into the bush. It was sold to Smyth & Boyer of Ngaroma, near Te Awamutu, in 1945 & used by them until the mill closed in late 1960s. It then went to the Tauranga Museum who ran it on their railway until that closed. It then went back to Ngongotaha to a preservation railway but that never got off the ground & they are now disposing of all their gear. Luckily it was stored in a shed but was partly dismantled. It is stored in our wood work shop at present and needs the back section completely rebuilding.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions: Many thanks to all who have renewed their subs. Special thanks to those who have included a donation, some of them are quite large. If you haven't paid up, this will be your last newsletter.

MEDICAL FORMS FOR DRIVERS & FIREMEN

CJ still needs some of these forms & copies of drivers' licences to be returned to the BTC. They are now a requirement of our safety system so sending this information in is important/ not optional.

“ERRATA”

Ian J comments about the March newsletter: “Another good newsletter but two corrections to the photo captions. The guy up the ladder working on the shed extension is actually me. The picture on the last page of A585 is at Rotowaro not Pukemiro Junction”.

This newsletter was produced by Richard Ellis, with much of the text from Colin Jenner, and contributions from several other members. Photos & text to add variety are needed and much appreciated. Send your contributions to secretary@bushtramwayclub.com.