

“We used to build civilisations – now we build shopping centres” – Bill Bryson

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Pukemiro Junction

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



Meremere diesel 402 at Pukemiro Junction– May 2022 – Photo - Nampu)

GREETINGS & WELCOME TO ANOTHER BTC NEWSLETTER

THE TIME TO VISIT US AGAIN HAS ARRIVED!

The BTC is finally back in action. Come along and make a day of it.....

OPEN DAYS, CHARTER TRIPS & GROUP VISITS

Our first open day since August 2021 was held on May 1st. This proved to be an exceptionally busy day with 550 passengers coming for rides. This was our 4th busiest open day ever. A very helpful takings amount was banked. We just ran the trains, as soon as one lot of passengers got off the trains, the next group were loaded on & we were away again.

Our June open day was also pretty busy with 330 passengers coming for rides.



A good crowd on the platform on a recent open day (C. Mann)

We were extremely short of members to help run our June open day. Again a very healthy banking followed.

These two very good open days have meant we can purchase some things that we have been putting off.

Thanks to all members who turn up to help run these days & charters but we need more members to train in all aspects of our railway.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have run a charter for Senior citizens from Ngaruawahia. At this stage, we have no further enquiries for charters. If you know of any group that may be interested in a charter, please contact us.



Above: Passengers enjoy the new awning outside the PJ café (C.Mann);

Below: The diesel train (Nampu)





The Peckett looking very clean with the Cb behind it at the recent open day (C.Mann) (above) and the Souvenir shop (Nampu) (below)



FRONZ CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the Federation of Rail Organisations of NZ was held in Invercargill this year. Every Queens' birthday weekend it is held in some part of NZ but has never been this far south before. Each year it is held in a different part of NZ, somewhere that has a railway flavour close by.

As part of the conference, a dinner is held during which awards are given out. We were very fortunate to get the KiwiRail infrastructure award for the best railway infrastructure in NZ. We won it for the extended level crossing. The award consists of a framed certificate to hang on the wall & a box containing a slice of 91pound/yard rail chrome plated in a box with shields of past holders mounted on the outside. We retain the trophy for 12 months.

There were no entries for the best restoration of a steam loco or wagon this year.

The best carriage restoration award went to the railway precinct group in Lumsden for their work on a very old carriage A199, built at Addington railway workshops in 1883.

The Rail Heritage award went to a group in Lauder for their restoration of the railway station there although the railway is no more.

The best diesel award went to Waitara Railway for their overhaul of a diesel loco from the Portland cement works near Whangarei.

We visited several railways in the area – we had a ride behind K92 at Manderville. The old carriage was being used for the first time carrying passengers. It came from the private railway at Ohai, a coal mining area out from Invercargill. K92 was dug out of a river bank near Invercargill some years ago.

We went for a ride on the Kingston Flyer but the Ab steam locomotive hauling the train stalled on the very steep climb out from Kingston from a lack of steam pressure & took a while to get up to a reasonable speed again. Shades of past times on our own line!!

During the conference, there were a number of speakers on all sorts of subjects relating to rail. The most interesting to me (CJ) was a talk by NZTA, NZ Transport Agency, who regulate all railways in NZ. They are shortly bringing out a new framework for carrying out their annual assessments of railways that they hope will give more consistent annual assessments. They are presently trying it out on a railway near Wellington. Getting all assessments done to the

same consistency has long been a problem.

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Colin J accepts the KiwiRail infrastructure award at the recent FRONZ conference in Invercargill (Photo: D. Maciulaitis)

AROUND THE JUNCTION

Dave M & CJ have continued with pruning back the lineside growth. There is still plenty to do!!

There has been a bit of gardening carried out at the Junction: Maarten & Lesley have planted some small camellia shrubs next to the main line just at the top of the drive up to the Junction & Russell has planted some flax bushes at the side of the drive.

Following very high winds, Dave M & CJ had to trim some branches off one of the pine trees at the top of the Junction yard which the wind had partly snapped off so they were hanging down & would have fouled on our trains.

Russell continues to keep our lawns mowed.

Maarten has also started a small vege garden at the side of the car park near the shanty. Last time I looked at it, the plants were partly eaten.

Ian J has put some flashing on the new shed behind the wood workshop.

Russell W & Dave M have been painting the woodwork on the new shelter in front of the rec room.



View of the top of the PJ yard (C. Mann)

Right at the start of May open day, one of the pipes to the hot water cylinder under the bench in the rec room burst. Richard S managed to blank the plastic pipe off otherwise there would have been no water at all available for the rec room. The whole floor of this place was well awash with water which had to be cleaned up before Russell, Marleen & Ian J could start work at all. We got a plumber out from Huntly to install a new hot water heater that we had had for a few years. It is much larger than the old one. The plumber found a vent pipe off the water system blocked so this was replaced with a new one. He also fixed a few small water leaks in this area as well. We then got a sparkie out to hook the power up to the new cylinder.

HEISLER 1082 FUND

The boiler awaits the finishing touches at Paekakariki - every dollar is welcome to complete the job. If you are able to, please send a donation, however small!

N.Z.T.A.

We have received the NZTA report from their annual assessment of BTC at the end of March. They found one non-compliance in that we grade the faults we find with our track A, B or C but we have nothing written in our safety system to say how we allocate these.

Pete C is presently doing a complete review of the track section of our safety system, with a little help from other members, so will include this requirement in it. There are a number of things that have changed over the years with the way we do our repairs & what we can use under our rails.

LOCOMOTIVES

Tr459: This loco was purchased by a member & donated to BTC some time ago. It was built by A & G Price of Thames in 1968 for NZ Railways & was used as a shunter around some of their smaller stations. It ended up sitting on a back shunt at Westfield's diesel depot in Auckland. It was stored at Ian J's warehouse near Mangere airport & he had hoped to get it sand blasted & painted before it came down to the Junction but that didn't happen. It arrived down on 10/6 & was craned off a transporter owned by Rob Edgecumbe of Pukekawa, near Pukekohe. The crane came from Waikato Cranes. The loco was driven into the loco shed under its own power but this meant that the Tr that needs the motor changing is now back outside again.



Tr459 arrives on a low loader awaiting unloading by a Waikato Cranes unit (I. Jenner)



Tr459 is lowered by crane onto the BTC track (R. Webb)

Ian J comments: Tr459 has more rust than the other recent arrival as this one sat out in the weather at Westfield for 3 or 4 years, however the engine is complete

& runs. We placed the loco on the rails & drove it down the yard & into the shed. It will be sandblasted & painted, & once that is done we will do the same to the first one plus swap the engine over for the good one that came from UK.

LESLEY REKKE.

Lesley was born in Wales, UK, on 1/6/1944. At the age of 12, her family moved to NZ.

She met Maarten at Judo training & they subsequently married.

We don't know much about their earlier life together except that they had a life style block at Cust, in Canterbury. She rode & trained horses & had a cat & a dog.

As the years got on, they purchased a camper bus after selling their life style block. Their intention was to tour NZ. During August 2016, part of their travels ended up at Pukemiro Junction. They joined BTC on 1/9/2016. From then on, they spent the winters at the Junction & travelled around NZ during the summer but always returning to the Junction for the winters.

Maarten is a good handy man & worked on a lot of jobs around the Junction while Lesley attended to the gardens, kept the toilets clean & helped out on open days – usually in the kitchen.

She tried to hide her health problems that were slowly getting worse until about two months ago she really started to go downhill. She helped selling our souvenirs once Beryl gave up a couple of years ago. She was still selling them at our open day during Queen's birthday this year with Cameron, Ian & Teresa B's grandson. Her health had got to a very bad state & she was admitted to Waikato Hospital on Sunday 12 June & passed away later that day.

They had a daughter, Adrienne, who lives in Clevedon, South Auckland, & they used to go up & look after the cats when Adrienne & her hubby went away for a few days.

Her love of animals was still with her as she fed the cats that lived at or around the Junction.

The BTC was well represented at her funeral service.

To Maarten & family, our deepest sympathy.

GALLERY

Recently Russell W found a hoard of old photos at PJ in a drawer; seen below:



Price "E" (above) and Climax (below) around 1980 at Pukemiro Junction.





“F” 185 being coaled up in the late 1970’s (Trev Terry) (above) & Pukemiro Junction station scene around 1980 (below)



This newsletter was produced by Richard Ellis, with much of the text from Colin Jenner – and others - send your contributions for future editions to secretary@bushtramwayclub.com.