

“You know, everyone is ignorant, only on different subjects” – Will Rogers ,1924

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Pukemiro Junction

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



TR105 is now “fit for service” to work on BTC passenger trains – (R. Stratford)

GREETINGS & WELCOME TO ANOTHER BTC NEWSLETTER

We welcome all our new members – we hope you will get involved!

OPEN DAYS, CHARTER TRIPS & GROUP VISITS

May Open Day: This was a pretty busy one. The Peckett was heading the train with a Meremere diesel loco on the lower end. For the mid-day trip when the Peckett needed servicing, Tr105 was put at the lower end with the Meremere diesel loco at the top end of the train. This was the first time that Tr105 had been used on a passenger train at the BTC & probably for the locomotive it was the first time it had been used on a passenger train in its 67 year life. It was made by A&G Price for shunting wagons at NZR, not hauling passenger trains.

June Open Day: This can only be described as an extremely busy one. We also had quite a few of our regular members away. I'm told that this was the busiest day since 2017. During the day, we carried 436 passengers plus a bunch of pre-schoolers. The locos in use were the same as the May Open Day. The café sold out of most things; a fast trip to Huntly to restock was done but it still sold out again. A very healthy amount was banked.



The Peckett with train at the June Open Day (C. Mann)



A large Open Day crowd was seen for both recent events (T. Bettison)



Enthusiastic Souvenir shop staff seen here at the June Open Day (T. Bettison)



The sausage sizzle is always a great hit with the public (Nampu)



The ticket office and souvenir shop is one of the BTC's core activities with Teresa on hand to give the Public advice (Nampu)



Our enthusiastic kitchen staff seen here at a recent Open Day make a great contribution to the club funds as well as satisfying the hungry visitors (Nampu)

Charter trips: Since the last newsletter, we have run 1 charter & have 4 more planned & a couple of enquiries. Thanks to all who come & make these trips run successfully.

Before & After Open Days: Not many members realise the work that goes into making our open days a success. Ian J & Marlene do a stocktake at the end of each Open Day so they know what they need to purchase for the next one. Marlene spends most of a day baking the cakes & biscuits that are on sale in the shop. While they were away, this was carried out by John S – except the baking!!

Russell W comes down a day or so before the open day & gets the chips & sausages out of the freezer. He then refills the chip fryer with cooking oil. He then comes back a day or so after the Open Day & cleans up, empties the chip fryer of the cooking oil & washes it out.

Jan & CJ usually come out on the day after an Open Day & sort out the rubbish, helped by Maarten R. This takes about half a day. Jan also cleans the toilets ready for the next one. She also looks at the cleaning supplies to see if we need to get more which means a trip to Hamilton.

Dave M & CJ re-coal the Peckett. This occasionally means that we have to screen the coal to get all the fine coal out of the nut grade coal. We also try & pick out any rock that is in the coal. This can take half a day.

CJ orders the coal when needed & arranges for its delivery. This means he must be at the Junction to receive the load.

He also orders the diesel tanker when it is required. This also means he must be at the Junction to get all the vehicles & containers ready for filling. Dave M helps out as well.

CJ also swaps the gas bottles when needed.

As you can see, open days just don't happen. There is a lot of work needed to be sure everything is ready for the open days.

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

NEW MEMBERS

We have had a couple of new members join. We hope you will become active members in our Club & help with the running of our Open Days & the maintenance of our equipment.

ALONG THE LINE

The damaged section of our railway still hasn't been repaired yet but there is a saying that weeds never stop growing & that is certainly the case on this section of our railway. Dave M has been spraying parts of this using a knapsack sprayer. To do this means either a 1.5km walk or him taking his car to Glen Afton then walking down the line. With the very heavy recent rain he has had difficulty getting enough fine days to continue.

John S has spent a couple of days, complete with wheel barrow & shovel, cleaning out some of the lineside drains.

AROUND THE JUNCTION

Russell W has spent a lot of time sorting out the driveway again as the recent very heavy rain scoured a lot of metal off again. It had dug waterways in the road bed.

Dave M & Russell continue to keep the lawns mowed & they have both done a lot of weed eating around the place.

LOCOMOTIVES & ROLLING STOCK

Steam locos:

Heisler: Dave M has continued cleaning the front bogie. He is shortly to take the crown wheel off the axle & clean it. Not a very clean job to get the sections off.

Diesel locos:

401: This loco blew the fusible plug (again) in the torque converter during the April Open Day. The plug was re-metalled but during it being screwed back in place, it snapped in half. The broken piece was removed & we are getting a couple of new ones made. Those involved were Pete C, Ian W & Richard S.

Tr105: Richard S, Richard E, Dave M & Maarten R have spent a lot of time fitting a new Westinghouse brake system to the loco so that the engine driver can work the carriage brakes. This system was recently tried out & it works well. There are a few minor air leaks still to sort out. This type of loco was made with an air system to work the locomotive brakes only, even though a through air pipe ran from the front to the back of the loco to enable the loco to be towed as part of a train.

FRONZ CONFERENCE

Most railways like the BTC belong to this organisation which represents the heritage railways in New Zealand at a national level. They hold a conference every King's birthday weekend. This year it was at the Copthorne hotel at Waitangi. This year 26 organisations attended. A lot of interesting speakers are selected to give a talk on some aspect of railway that affects us all. This year's highlight speakers were from NZ Transport Agency, our licence managers & Aon Insurance. NZTA spoke about a new method of them carrying out the annual assessments of all railways so that there is consistency across all railways. Aon spoke about the need for indemnity insurance. A feature of every conference is visits to railways that are close by. This year we went to the Whangarei Model & Steam Railway & the Kawakawa railway. The one at Whangarei has a small Peckett loco. This was the last steam loco imported into NZ & was used for carting bagged cement out on the wharf to ships. It is an 0-4-0 side tank loco. Kawakawa has a much bigger Peckett which is a 4-4-0 loco with side tanks. Both of these locos came from the Portland Cement works near Whangarei. Both these locos have new boilers, the one at Kawakawa had only been in steam twice on tests but recently took a passenger train up their line

with a train consisting of 4 carriages. The Kawakawa boiler cost well into 6 figures & as the original boiler was riveted & the new boiler was to be a welded one, the inspecting company wouldn't accept the original plans so they had to get new plans made & accepted at a cost for these well into 5 figures.

I find you always get something new from each conference, so it is well worth the BTC attending.

OLD PHOTOS OF OUR LINE

In the last newsletter there was a photo of a Bb class loco at the Pukemiro station. If you study the photo & compare it with today, you'll see some changes to what we have now. Beside the loco tender is a point lever with a siding going off. This was reputed to be for any box wagon of explosives that arrived. It was stored there until it was taken up to the mine. Also there is another building behind the station. This was a doctor's surgery.

There is another photo of a Bb on a passenger train just on the Glen Afton side of the Junction. Now there is a concrete level crossing on a road that gives



access to a construction & demolition dump in the place of the previous mine.

DUMPED / STOLEN CARS

The day before our May open day I (CJ) went up to see if the crossing at Hangapipi Rd. needed cleaning out. I noticed a burnt out car just down the line from the crossing. It must have been burnt out the night before as a couple of our sleepers were still smoking. I tried contacting the Police but gave up after they didn't answer the 105 call so I then tried 111 but still no answer. Richard S suggested that we take a loco & wire rope down & tow the car up to the level crossing & then use my ute to tow it down the road a way. This we did. Next morning on our way out to the Junction, we noticed that the car had been shifted

well down the road & was in the middle of the road. It was gone by the time that our first train went past.

On 21/6/23, I (CJ) sprayed some wild ginger plants that were growing at the Junction. As there was a bit of spray left, it was a gorse spray, I decided to go down the line & spray some gorse. I noticed some new tyre tracks beside the line that looked like from a quad bike but as I got down further I found what were obviously vehicle tyre tracks.. As I went round a curve, lo & behold a ute was sitting on the track. When I got to it, the heating fan was still going & the ute was complete. I suspected that it was being backed down the line & had run out of diesel. I called the Police. Russell W went down & found the padlock on the gate unlocked which he then locked. The Police called me (CJ) at home at approx. 3.45pm as they were up at Hangapipi Rd & could I come out & unlock the padlock. We went out there & unlocked the padlock. The Police told me that a tow truck from Hamilton was on its way out. The worry was that as the ute was complete, someone would come back at night, take the mud grip wheels off it & then set fire to it. As it was approx. 250 metres up the line from the crossing it would be very hard to get it out if it was burnt out.

A lot of vehicles get dumped on the roads out the back of Huntly as there is not a lot of traffic going past outside work hours. We certainly don't welcome them being dumped on our line.

GALLERY



Colin J seen at work on the Heisler bogies many, many, years ago(A. Turner)



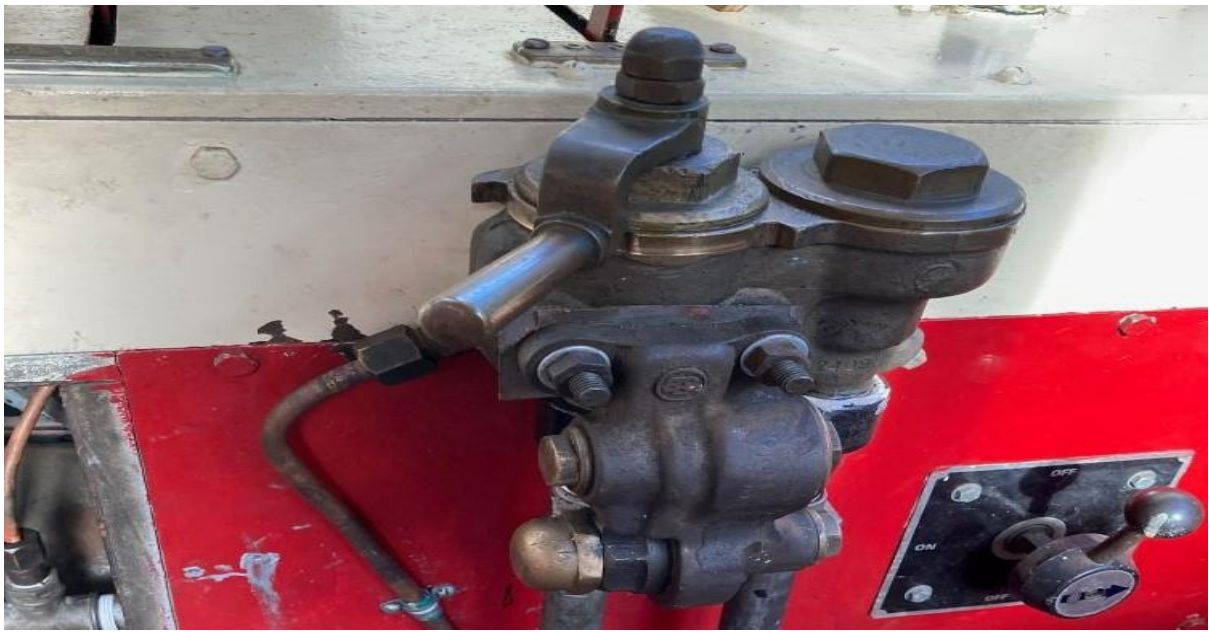
Readers may be aware that Huntly railway station was recently returned to (guess where?) Huntly railway station yard, whereupon it was promptly set on fire by local hooligans....apparently without serious damage (Teresa B)



Tr105 is now able to be used on our Open Days after train brakes were fitted (Nampu)



Above: New brass number plates set off the smart appearance of Tr105. . (Nampu). Below: New train brake valve on TR105 (R.Stratford)



RES excursion up the Glen Afton line with Bb144 in 1961 (J.Stitchbury/ courtesy R. Stratford)



Bb144 with RES excursion train in 1961 at Pukemiro (J.Stitchbury/ courtesy R. Stratford)



Bb 621 seen here in 1957 at Pukemiro (RJ Mellor/ courtesy of R.Stratford)



Our Peckett seen here in 1955 at Pukemiro Junction. Readers may not be aware that this locomotive is the only heritage locomotive in New Zealand to have never moved from its original workplace in preservation (RJ Mellor/courtesy of R. Stratford)

IMPORTANT DATE FOR OPERATING MEMBERS -

SUNDAY 23RD July 2023 starting at 10am. A day is planned that requires ALL OPERATING members to attend.

1st: The annual shunting course.

2nd: The annual safety refresher course.

3rd: If the weather is reasonable a fire fighting course on the use of fire extinguishers followed by a course on the use of our fire fighting wagon & its gear.

If time permits there are some our new members who need to go through the Clubs' induction course.

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.