

“I love being a writer – what I can’t stand is the paperwork” – Peter de Vries (1910-93)

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# Pukemiro Junction

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



Recent trackwork near the pine trees (T.Willmot)



## GREETINGS & WELCOME TO ANOTHER BTC NEWSLETTER

### OPEN DAYS, CHARTER TRIPS & GROUP VISITS

**September Open Day:** This was another busy day with just over 500 passengers carried. The Peckett was at the head of the train with a Meremere diesel loco at the other end. We just managed to carry everyone in our 2 carriages during the day without lots of passengers waiting because the train was full. Another healthy banking occurred.

During the day, our café cooked & sold 42 kgs of chips & 170 sausages.

The Peckett, as usual, had to leave the train around midday to have the fire cleaned & the ashpan emptied. The second diesel loco used during this time was the other Meremere loco.

**October Open Day:** This was another very busy day with just over 700 passengers carried. Our Chairman & Secretary had looked at the likely numbers of passengers based on our Facebook and website enquiries, so it was decided to start the day by using our 3 carriages. We ran our trains every 3/4 of an hour. If there were a lot of passengers waiting because the train was full, we just ran as soon as the passengers were off the train & the next lot were on board. By using the 3 carriages right from the start, it meant we did not have lots of passengers waiting as the train had a larger capacity than usual.

The “Chip Index” showed that, again, 42 kgs of chips were cooked & sold along with lots of small & large pies etc. We also used all the bread on hand for 216 sausages & 34 toasted sandwiches.

Whilst the Peckett was away being serviced, Tr459 was the other diesel loco used.

Our souvenirs sold well on both days. We sold a lot of train whistles – not too sure that the parents appreciated them a couple of weeks later though!!

Many thanks to all who turn up & help run these days, as you can read, we can be very busy.

We may be short of members to help on our November open day as a lot of our regulars will be away.

**Charter trips:** We haven't had any since the last newsletter.



Above & below - the Peckett & train at the July Open Day (Brian Karl – all rights reserved)



## TREES

A kind member has donated quite a number of small Totara trees in pots. We need to think of somewhere to plant them, perhaps near our existing Totara tree.

## ALONG THE LINE

The day before our September Open Day, it was decided to have a go at trying to sort out the sandfill area that had been damaged by earthquakes in February. Pete C took our small digger to the area, while Ian J took our loader up there to dig out a slip just before the sandfill.

The smaller of the 2 twists was lifted out of the ballast & pretty well went back to its previous shape. Pete then “tweaked” the track on the uphill side to line it up better. Ballast from 2 x Yb wagons were dumped on this area as the track had dropped approx. ½ metre across the whole centre of the area.

In the meantime, Ian J was digging out the slip. Just before the sandfill. This work meant we could run another 100 metres up the line.

Those helping in addition to Pete C and Ian J were: Dave M, Ian W, CJ, Vincent N and Evan W.

The track just below the Junction has been made very uneven by the large pine tree roots that have grown across from our pine trees. One track set in particular badly needed attention & it was decided to lift the track set, get the tree roots out, & then replace any sleepers that needed replacing while the rails were off the sleepers.

A Community work crew pulled the track set apart a week beforehand & dug out some of the roots that we could see. Ian J, Trev W & Dave M got stuck in on the Friday before our October open day. They decided it would be easier to renew all the sleepers & then dig down to give a new track bed. They also found a lot more tree roots. They were still digging them out early on the Saturday morning. We had a very good working bee with 11 members turning up to help. Unfortunately it had rained on the Friday & really rained on Saturday, but the job had to be completed that day so we could run on the Sunday. All the sleepers were replaced & the rails screwed down by lunch time. Unfortunately one of the rails was  $\frac{3}{4}$  “shorter than it needed to be. Not sure how this happened but it was promptly fixed.

As soon as the rails were in place, Ian J on the loader started carting new ballast down & spreading it over this area. The rails had to be jacked & packed to give a good line with the adjacent track. After this was done, a further 1½ tracksets was lifted on one side & packed with new ballast as well.

All this time it rained with some very heavy showers but as the saying goes “the show must go on”!!





Holy ground where the roots had been (T.Willmot)

Those involved were Pete C, Ian J, Ian W, CJ, Trev W, Bill R-W, Richard S, Dave M, Matthew C, Vincent N & Andrew H. We now have a very smooth section of track, rather than the very uneven track as previously.





New sleepers being laid (T.Willmot)

Even while lifting & packing the other track sets, a couple of very large roots were dug out. The quantity of roots dug out would have filled a medium sized truck tray.

There are at least a further 6 areas that need the same treatment.

The Yb's of ballast have been refilled by Richard S & Dave M ready to go up to the sandfill area.

Large areas of our track need weed spraying but the weather hasn't permitted this yet.

### AROUND THE JUNCTION

Dave M & CJ have been spraying the weeds in the Junction yard but it is now the growing season so we need to keep at it.

Dave M continues to keep our lawns mowed.

Several CW crews have been clearing out the drain that runs down the side of the drive up to the Junction & have spent 3 days on this job so far. It is many years since this was done.

### LOCOMOTIVES & ROLLING STOCK

#### **Steam locos:**

Heisler: The front bogie of this loco has been completely pulled apart & the wheel sets have gone up to Glenbrook Railway to have the axle journals & crank pins trued up.

Richard S has made a small trolley so that the front end of the loco can sit on it & the loco can now be moved around.

#### **Rolling Stock:**

Xp wagon: Bruce McL has spent some time cutting out pieces of timber to fit just above the ventilators on the side of this wagon. When the pieces are in place, he will fit some pieces of flashing that will fit up under the tongue & groove timber of the sides. These will also fit over the pieces of timber & keep the weather out.

Large flat top wagon: This wagon came from the Huntly West underground mine quite a few years ago & was used for carting heavy machinery underground. It is very wide & has very small wheels & is carried on 2 bogies. We have used it occasionally for carting diggers up & down the line.



A member has purchased & donated a 3 way tipping body off an Isuzu truck. It is mounted on one end of the flat wagon with the intention of using the wagon to cart our small digger up & down the line cleaning out lineside drains. The muck dug out will be put on this tipping body & then dumped some place alongside our railway.



The Isuzu tipper body mounted on the old Huntly West mine wagon (LJenner)

### **Diesel locos:**

Planet loco: This loco has been out of action for quite a while as the engine mounting bolts had snapped off. To drill the ends out of the engine block, the motor had to be removed from the loco, not a small job.

Richard S has done the job so far & intends checking a couple of bearings while the motor is out. We are also having to replace the flexible drive between the gearbox & the forward / reverse box & a section of the exhaust system which was found to be cracked.

A couple of the ends of the engine mounting bolts came out fairly easy but one had to be chiselled out by using a very small chisel. This chisel was made from a high tensile nail sharpened to a chisel end. In the end, he won the battle.



# GALLERY



Heisler bogies, the battery electric loco, the new tipper wagon setup and BTC member Evan W (C.Mann)



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Meremere & carriages, July 2023 (Brian Karl, all rights reserved)





Pete and the gang with the hand crane in the upper yard (C.Mann)



The hand crane, Alan U and pieces of Heisler outside the loco shed workshop (C.Mann)





A familiar Open Day scene... Chris & Vinney .(K. Kopa)





The digger was invaluable at the recent trackwork working bee (T.Willmot)

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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](mailto:secretary@bushtramwayclub.com).