

“The truth is rarely pure, and never simple” (Oscar Wilde, 1854–1900)

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Pukemiro Junction

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



Tr459 outside the loco shed recently (Kayne K)

GREETINGS & WELCOME TO ANOTHER BTC NEWSLETTER

OPEN DAYS, CHARTER TRIPS / GROUP VISITS

Open days: March: This could only be described as surely the wettest open day ever. We carried 55 adults, 30 children & 13 preschoolers.

We could also have been affected by a Thomas the Tank engine day @ GVR & a half price weekend at the Hamilton zoo, however I suspect that the very wet day was the main reason for our very low patronage. The weather partly cleared up towards the end of the day.

April: This was a much better day & we carried 247 adults, 79 children & 80 preschoolers. The weather was very fine.

The country side was still too dry to allow the Peckett to run out of Pukemiro yard.

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

Charter trips: The only charter we had booked was cancelled.

We have just received an enquiry for one in June & another in March next year. The one for next year is a tour group from Ffestiniog railway in Wales. We used to have them many years ago.

ALONG THE LINE

Great progress has been made with repairing the sandfill area that was damaged by an earthquake in February 2023. On the Saturday before the last two open days, there were working bees on this area. Pete C, Evan & Vinnie spent the March one lifting & tamping 10 metres of the centre of this area that had dropped at least ½ metre . They then dumped 2 x Yb wagons of ballast on this area.

On the Saturday before the April open day, 8 members, led by Pete C carried on lifting & packing more track in the area. They have removed the fish plates on the remaining section of twisted track & worked out how to fix this curve.



Activity in early April on the sandfill (Kayne K)

We have had another visit from the CW crews. This time they replaced 2 rails on the track leading into the woodwork shop where the webs had rusted out. They also replaced 6 sleepers under one of these rails. There are still a few more rails like this in Pukemiro yard that have to have the same treatment.

A week or so ago, I was checking our carriages for their annual inspections & noticed that the rail that a point blade was made from on the point opposite the station was made in 1894 & is still ok!!

Dave M has been weed spraying the top end of the line.

Areas main transmission line: This is a 11,000 volt line which starts at Huntly & ends at Te Akau, on the opposite side of the harbour to Raglan township.

On April 17, electricity was shut off to the area from Hangapi Rd to the start of Glen Afton township & a very large amount of work was carried out. 4 X wooden poles were replaced on our land from the pine trees at the bottom of Pukemiro yard to Hangapi Rd. The poles are thought to be at least 70 years old. Access to this area is impossible for vehicles. The new post holes were drilled beside the old poles using a hand held post hole borer. The new concrete poles lifted into place by a helicopter.

As well, the badly leaning pole beside our station was partly straightened & the cross arms were replaced. The cross arms on the pole on the edge of our car park had the cross arms replaced.

The pole near the top of our driveway was replaced as was the transformer. All in all, a lot of work.

AROUND THE JUNCTION

Bruce McL has repaired another section of the front edge of our station platform.

Jill C continues to keep the kitchen in the shop clean & tidy.

Dave M continues to keep the lawns cut & has been cutting up a lot of badly rusted rail to sell as scrap.

LOCOMOTIVES & ROLLING STOCK

Rolling Stock:

#3 car A1477: Richard E was over for a few weeks & made great progress on the inside of this car. He was helped by Russell W, Dave M, Fraser R, Kayne K, Bill R-W & Rob B. The ceiling was painted, the light fittings & brass ventilators were installed & the walls were painted. A plywood floor was laid over the old floor as sections of it wasn't in very good order. Vinyl was put down on the new plywood.

Dave M & Rob B spent a lot of time working on the trim strips. This car hasn't had a lot done on it for a couple of years.



Over 3 weeks Richard E, Rob B and Dave M & Russell W (not in the picture) painted the walls and ceiling in the recent work on A1477,

A328 Mines car: While the extinguisher in this car was being checked, I (CJ) noticed that the gangway that connects it to the next car had some of the wooden slats falling off. When Dave M & myself (CJ) came to get it off, we found a plate on it had rusted itself onto a plate under it. Much banging with a small sledge hammer was necessary to get it free so we could take it off. We then got stuck into the plate that was underneath to remove the rust & then put 2 coats of paint on it. We then fitted a spare gangway.

Xp wagon: Bruce McL has continued fitting the flashings over the ventilators.



The Xp boxvan continues to be worked on by Bruce McL (Richard E)

A1319 “Mary” – Richard E, Rob B and Trevor T have managed to get the lights going again, & fitted yet another battery to power them.

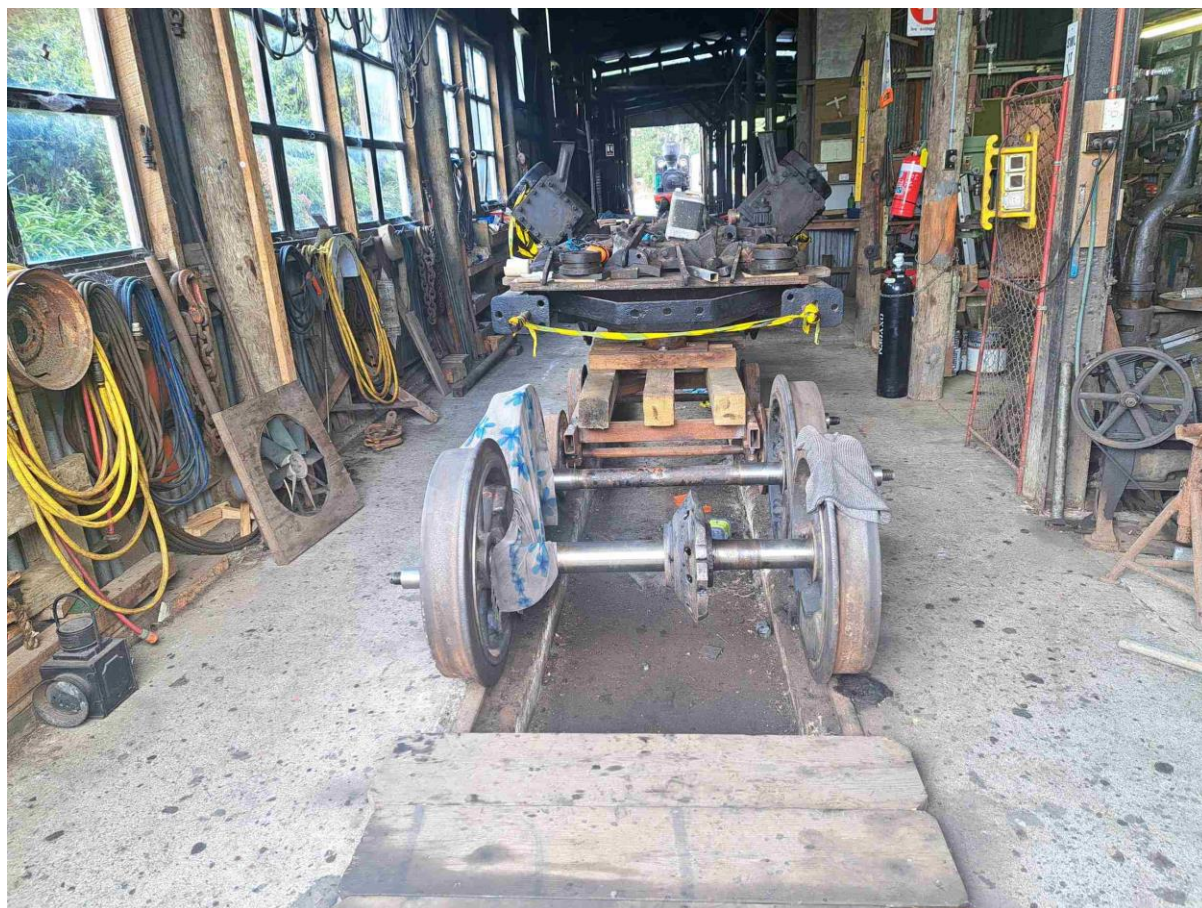
Steam locos:

Peckett: This has passed its 2 inspections. Chris M was helped by Fraser R, Alan U, & Dave M to get the loco put back together again.

Heisler: The newly turned wheel sets have been returned from Glenbrook Rly. We had the axle journals trued up & bearings turned to suit these journals on one bogie.

Tr105: The air brake system on this loco has been fitted with a number 4 Westinghouse brake valve so it can operate the carriage brakes. The system worked well but we found early last year that the system couldn't cope with frequent use when taking a train downhill, even just using the engine brake.

Richard E checked the compressor & found that 2 cylinders weren't working properly, so he took both heads off the compressor & took them into a firm in Hamilton to be looked at. To get the valves out, the firm had to make a special tool. The job took many months but he went & collected them while he was at the Junction recently. He has fitted them back on the loco & test run it but we haven't tried the loco with a train down the line yet. Dave M and Fraser R have assisted.



Refurbished Heisler wheels in the loco workshop (Richard E)

AGM & TRAINING SESSION

AGM: This was held on 24/3 & attended by 17 members. The committee is still the same: Pete C is Chairman, Richard E is Secretary, Pete C is interim Treasurer, & CJ is still appointed by the committee as GM. The other committee members are John S, Richard S, Guy C, Geoff B & Ashley T.

There was a lot of discussion about the need to get more members & passengers. Kayne K & Richard C have agreed to investigate ways of accomplishing this.

Jill C cooked up lunch, which was very welcome.

A shunting refresher course was held before the AGM. A practical exercise of signalling an engine in to a wagon, hooking it up & then unhooking it & then signalling the loco away was held. The different types of brakes were looked at & all newer members were shown how the tumbler point levers operate.



The AGM participants (Richard E)

SUBS

Subs: Thanks to all who have renewed their subs. We have only 3 who haven't. We have also had a few new members recently. Welcome to our Club, we hope you will become active members.

LICENCE WITH WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL

This is for the top section of our line: It is probably not known to many of our members but a section of the land we run our railway on is a recreation reserve

& administered by the Council. This section is from the concrete level crossing just above the Pukemiro yard to the end of our line at Glen Afton. We have been trying for approx. 4 years to get this licence renewed but there have been many holdups, both from BTC's & WDC's points of view. Recently Tainui came into the picture as well.

At long last, we have received the final version & it is just needing signing now. Over the years, many members have worked on this as to start with it was just a normal licence rather than being one that fits our needs.

GALLERY



The Peckett & Meremere diesel 402 at a recent Open Day – Guy C looking on (Kayne K)



Richard E, Kayne K, Dave M & Bill R-W replaced the floor of A1477 with plywood, did painting and so on. Russell W was "action man" almost every day and Rob B and Fraser R were valuable contributors as the project commenced....



A1477 towards the end of the recent work – the new floor is installed c/w vinyl and the seat squabs purchased from Goldfields Railway demonstrate the somewhat narrow aisle that will eventuate once the seats are installed. The team spent a day vinyl gluing (R. E.)



JS inserts a sleeper at the recent sandfill working bee (Kayne K)



Sandfill action at the recent track working bee – this was highly successful as well as being hard work! (Kayne K)



A recent view of the loco shed interior at the Shanty end (Richard E)

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.
