



The Goldfields Express

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Message from the President

Hi All!

Hope you all had a lovely summer and enjoyed the beautiful weather. Even with the economic climate we had a busy time at the station with lots of school groups enjoying the train. Our foreign tourists are still coming to ride the train, some of them for the second time.



It's interesting to note that during the February/March period we have had 30 groups from the Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions booked on the train and as well as the school groups, we also had groups from organisations such as Probus, Girls Brigade, Gardening Clubs etc.

We are now listed as a Parkover camping site and would love to see any of you who wish to ride the train and stay over for a night or two. Just look for this sign on the fence.

After a meeting with the Mayor we now have a much clearer idea of the route for the cycle track and how it will affect the railway. It looks as though it could be advantageous to us, but we'll know more when it is all finalised. We'll keep you all informed.

Bob Morton

New Members to the Society



- ☺ John Sutherland (Happy) Pahoia, Katikati
(John is currently learning to drive trains and is also helping out with track work)
- ☺ Ron Fitzherbert Paeroa

Thank you for your interest and support in Goldfields Railway, and for the contribution you are making (and will be making!)

Thanks to our Sponsors:

We would like to recognise and record our grateful thanks to our sponsors, without whom we would not have been able to have achieved as much as we have on our various projects.



✿ John Crabtree

✿ Wattyl Paints

And of course our thanks must always go to the many volunteers and supporters that are involved in operations of Goldfield Railways, including operation of the trains, restoration work etc.

Thank you everyone

From the General Manager's Desk: *Dennis Blake*

Loco 6:

As mentioned in our January/February newsletter our Loco 6 was out of service requiring some repair work. Since then the 'Wiseman's box' has been removed with assistance from Hutchins' Engineering. A number of faults were found, including drive shaft misaligned, brakes need realigned and new brake blocks and this work has now been done. The battery by the fuel tank bonnet and electrical work still be carried out. So work is progressing on this loco as a result of the efforts by several people, including Anton Douglas.

Loco 7

Work on the No.7 loco has also been undertaken, including the forward reverse gear, and repair work on the brakes as well.

Bridges:

Repair work on the Waitete Bridge has now been completed and Opus have given certificate for the bridges until December 2011.

A replacement for the Waitete Bridge : Options are currently are being considered and a report is currently being prepared by HEB Construction.

Track Work:

Volunteer staff and Correction Dept personnel have replaced approximately 20 sleepers recently.

Update on Restoration Projects:

Bob Morton, Don Martin, Allan Carter, John Ellin,



■ *Glenbrook Carriage*

Work on the carriage continues to be main focus for the Restoration Team, with installation of the windows on the 2nd side now completed by Don, and he has now moved on to repairing/replacing the woodwork in the verandahs. John has been restoring the woodwork on the inside of the carriage, and Allan is currently working on the railing at the end of the carriages cleaning them down and repainting them.

■ **1944 Prices' Shunter** (Phill Boyd, Anton Douglas, Ashton Baird, Brian Rae)



Phill and his son Russell together with Anton have worked on the Shunter over the past couple of months and have been busy 'creating' parts for the Shunter which included:

- Chain guard for the brake
- Frame for the Bonnett
- Bonnet front panel with grill

We certainly do appreciate and value all the work that Phill and his team have been doing on the Flyer, and understand completely why that it has been necessary for Phill to call a 'halt' to work on the Flyer for a period to enable him to catch up with work required on his own property. The team will return to the project as soon as they are able, and we will be able to give you an update in our next newsletter.

Update from 'Back to Steam' Subcommittee:

'Steaming' Ahead Slowly (Rob Bowater - Chairman)

Progress has been frustratingly slow, due to factors beyond our control, in the investigation as to the most economically way to re-introduce a steam locomotive back into regular service on our line.

The main concern has been the slow responses to our requests for information, which, unfortunately, is beyond our control. With numerous phone calls made and emails sent we just have to be patient to get the answers.



Our Peckett loco has been assessed by an SGS inspector who has given us an overall but inconclusive, report (costing \$1500) on the boiler, A recommendation that we now get the boiler ultrasonically tested is being looked at with the hope of doing this at minimum cost as we don't want to spend excessive money on a boiler which may in the end be un-repairable.

For ultrasonic testing the side tanks and lagging will need to be removed. To do this we will need a group of volunteers to give their time on a day, probably during the week, to work under the direction and supervision of experienced steam fitter, John Pudsey of Tauranga. Please let me know if you can help.

We are continuing our interest in four suitable locomotives, which could be available for lease. One of these is fully operational but it will be June before any decision is made where its future permanent home will be.

Meantime a call is being put out for any experienced steam personnel to put their hand up and offer their services with maintenance or driving when ever steam returns here. The experienced personnel available and the suitability of our facilities will all be relevant as to our success in, hopefully, obtaining a leased locomotive should the management committee decide this is the best option. Naturally the owner of any leased loco will want it looked after and maintained to a high standard.

If you have steam experience and will be willing to help please phone Rob Bowater on 07 863 8863 or email him on robannette@clear.net.nz



The Financial Facts

Chris Hale -Treasurer

During the past year Goldfields have undertaken a lot of upgrade and repair work to both our Track and our Rolling Stock. This has been work that had to be completed to ensure the continued operation of our Railway in a sound and safe manner. There is a lot more work ahead of us including the replacement of our two wooden bridges.

The ticket sales have been slightly up on previous years and this has provided some of the funding needed to carry out the upgrade and repair work. Further funding has been gained from Lotteries Heritage, The James Say Trust, The Valder Trust, Waikato Trust, Donations from the public and donations from members. We are heavily reliant on outside funding to maintain our assets

We employ one person (Sherryl) part time in the office and she is supported by Irene and Carolyn as volunteers. We currently have two people funded by Work and Income who assist with the track work and day to day operations.

Dennis voluntarily looks after the operation of the Trains and the upgrade of our track, bridges and the Rolling Stock. The train operation is in the hands of our Volunteer Drivers and Guards and we engage a contractor to complete the track and bridge work.

Restoration is in the hands of Bob and his team who are all volunteers and they are making good progress with their work. Funds for this work come from outside funders and housing rentals

The House rentals are managed by PGG Wrightson and the Waikino Station Cafe leased by Tony and Diane. The maintenance of the houses is covered by the rentals

The Land on which we operate is owned by the Dept of Conservation and we have a 30 year lease which is based on 4% of our turnover from ticket sales and house rentals.

The purpose of giving you this back ground is to help you understand that the volunteers and the outside funding are extremely important to our Railway. The operational income keeps the wheel turning and provides the contribution that the funder of our track work requires.

Usually at this time of the year we would have \$30,000 plus in our account to cover our winter operation when ticket sale income is minimal. This year due to urgent expenditure on our trains and bridges we have under \$5000. We still have another six weeks of good sales ahead but this will only add a further \$8000 - \$10000 to our account after Operational expenses.

We are placing funding applications with Lotteries Heritage for track work and the James Say Trust for train repairs.

All this means that we will go into the winter in a tight financial situation, undertaking only what we can afford.

We are gradually getting our operation upgraded but it will take time and continued good support from our members and funders.

Snapshot of the History of Building the Railways throughout NZ

Graeme Martin

One of the best books I have read concerning the building of the railways throughout New Zealand in the late 1800's and early 1900's is the history of the Ministry of Works called "By Design" by Rosslyn Noonan published in 1975. This details the labour intensive methods used, as money was short and modern machinery that we take for granted, did not exist. Railway camps were primitive and often many days walk away from civilisation.

"Blood, Iron & Gold" is the title of a book by Christian Wolmar published in 2009. It was available from the Waihi Library till my dogs ate the cover which cost me the standard penalty of \$30. However it covers the period from the first railways to the comparative modern era. When we look at our 6.5km of track between Waihi & Waikino, we tend to forget just what it took to build the railway through the Karangahake Gorge from Paeroa, and what else was happening in the world at the time.

Think about how the first commercial railway chugged along its primitive tracks in 1830, between Liverpool and Manchester, just 15 years after the Battle of Waterloo, and just 10 years before our Treaty of Waitangi was signed establishing British dominance of this country. From this small beginnings railway operations spread to Europe and the Americas. Gauge was argued before a Royal Commission settled the issue with the adoption of 4'8.5" being the standard gauge in 1845. In 1832 the French open with great fanfare a 36 mile line based in Lyon. The first railway in the USA was started in 1828 centred on Baltimore.

However in Europe and the Americas, take up was slow until the respective governments realised that railway was the most efficient method of transporting military supplies and troops over long distances to sort out the opposition. Between the 1830's and 1860's railway spread across Europe like a flood opening up markets and the people to both travel and economic developments. Rolling stock and infrastructure design was mostly by guess and good luck as no-one had any experience in either designing or construction of railways.

British influence and money took railways into Ireland in 1845 and then to India in 1850 to put down the Indian Mutiny. By 1870 railways had spread across the Indian sub-continent. Brazil and Panama followed shortly after. Australasia got its first railway line in 1854 in South Australia and Tasmania - although Tasmania was still building horse drawn lines until the early 1900's. New South Wales and Victoria followed in 1858.

USA had their first Railway and in the 30 years to 1895 after the American Civil War (1861 to 1865) tracks spread across the continent often duplicated by competing lines. Lands owners, Indians, speculators and funds delayed completion of a Transcontinental crossing until 1883. A Transcontinental crossing of Canada was not achieved until 1915.

Back in New Zealand the Maori Wars and expeditions against the Hauhau dragged on throughout the North Island until 1880 involving a huge expenditure for an increasingly financially troubled government. While we like to look back on the lure of Gold with rose coloured spectacles and re-written history, those time were blighted by financial depressions and very little development. Waihi area was in fact described by travelled as a god forsaken plain of scrub and terrible weather.



When gold mining commenced in Waihi after the establishment of a dominant company in 1896, the first railway line was proposed to Athenree, but as the nearest port facilities were at Paeroa, the more difficult line was built through the gorge. The Government of the day was looking to use the railways to open up land for agriculture development and there were many competing demands from politicians for railways within their respective boundaries. For cash strapped administration, a difficult line purely for a public company was not on the drawing boards. After all the profits from the mining company were all repatriated to Britain, so the mining company put up the funds and the line was built.

The land around the Southern Bay of Plenty was being developed into a rich agriculture based so a railway workshop was created at Mt Maunganui where the port is now. The wharves there once decent road in form of unmetalled tracks joined up the area in the 1890's. Once the Waihi section of the line was opened in 1905, the following year the Government decreed that the branch line to Paeroa would become the new main line connecting Auckland & Gisborne to encourage further development of the Bay of Plenty region. The workshops there built the entire steel work infrastructure for the entire East Cape region including all the bridges south of Waihi, and the great Mohaka Viaduct. However by 1919, the Southern BOP had a railway line the great distance between Tauranga and Te Puke what we would today consider a short drive, but to the settlers then, a magnificent undertaking as discussed in the book **"History of Mt Maunganui" published by the Borough in 1989.**

During this entail period, the trials and tribulations rocking the world at that time during the Great War of 1914 to 1918 with millions of lives were being lost plus expensive equipment destroyed, created incredible financial demands upon on what was a really primitive economy such as ours at that time.



Trans Siberian Railway (Red Line)

- started in 1891
- completed in 1916

Coming back to Waihi, once the railway arrived in Waihi by 1905 and the link opened to Tauranga in 1927, civilisation arrived and on the back of mining a varied and rich industrial & agricultural base developed not only to support the mining community, but supply both domestic and international markets as well.

Our tenacious link to Paeroa between 1905 & 1927 opened up to our townspeople markets around the Waikato, Thames and Auckland. Just think what would have happened to our line if the original rail tunnel through the Kaimai's as proposed in 1909 was built. The demise of our township industrial base would have occurred much sooner than 1978, or maybe have not developed past the mining stage. **Laurie Barber in 1985 using the words "No Easy Riches"** as a title for his book on the history of the Ohinemuri County describes events pretty accurately.

This is just a very brief snapshot of how our railway fitted into the national and international scene during the mid 1800's and early 1900's. Perhaps someone may become more passionate about preserving what little industrial heritage New Zealand has left as a link to how New Zealand was created for us to enjoy. Something the early settlers had little time or money for.

References:

"By Design" by Rosslyn Noonan published in 1975
 "Blood, Iron & Gold" by Christian Wolmar published in 2009
 "History of Mt Maunganui" published by the Borough in 1989
 "No Easy Riches" by Laurie Barber published in 1985

Maps from:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Northisland>

Interesting to compare the distance and environments of the NZ Main Trunk Line and the Trans Siberian Railway and then consider the amount of time it took to complete each of them.



From the Pages of Our History:

Our Heritage Houses

by Rob Bowater (Foundation Member)

Our society was very fortunate to be able to purchase in 1980 the six houses in the station complex, as they were a familiar part of the early New Zealand railway scene.

Discussions took some time before the Railways Department were convinced that the Society needed them for the vision of developing a community-based tourist railway.

I remember the Hamilton-based N.Z.R. Resident Engineer, Ray Howe coming to meet us early in 1980 and pointing out that each house would sell for \$30,000 on the open market. In fact the Department had disconnected the electricity and water supplies prior to our keen interest to retain them, so we had to talk positively pointing out exactly what we had in mind for each one. The proposed uses included a restaurant, a caretaker's home, a clubroom, model railways display, accommodation for out-o-town helpers and a museum. It was in May 1980 when Mr Howe told us his Department would hand over the land and surplus houses, with their recommendations, over to the Land and Survey Dept..

The Society made a firm offer for the all six houses - \$10,000 the lot. Surprisingly this was accepted and even given ten years to pay it off with ten per cent interest. This was a real boost for our new society. We must always be grateful to N.Z.R. for their sympathetic ear and support to establish our railway.

In the early years one of the houses was used for out-of-town workers weekend accommodation and a committee meeting venue, another had minor interior alterations for model railways, whilst another became a caretaker's residence

Considerable clean up and maintenance had to be carried out on the houses prior to any of them being let as they had been unoccupied and neglected for several years.

Five of the houses were pre-fabricated in Frankton and each erected in two to three weeks around 1925-6. The house near our big shed was built on site in 1904

Two of the original houses were sold for \$750 each and shifted off the site in 1970 but remain in Waihi - one at the corner of Baber and Kenny streets and the other into Islington Terrace. Barry Jarvis of Waihi who worked for 21 years for N.Z.R. and was in charge of the Waikino - Paeroa South railway uplift, purchased them.

The stationmaster's house facing Victoria Street was built in 1904 to much superior design. This was evidence of the importance and prestige accorded the early stationmasters, It was sold under separate title in 1983

Because of their importance the society's houses have a classification under the Hauraki District Council's Historic Heritage Inventory.

