



The Goldfields Express

March - April 2010

Message from the President

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We are still here! This is thanks to an incredible team down at the station and within the Management Committee. We have seen our income slightly above the same time last year which is no mean feat considering the downturn of around 8% in visitor number and spending in the Waikato region both from domestic and international markets. The work that has also been achieved to keep the railway open in the face of previously ignored demands of our regulatory bodies is a real credit to those members who have sweated their hearts out.

Unfortunately as within any organisation there are still the minority who see it as their duty to create issues, while no doubt well meaning, time is wasted attending to their needs. The Management Committee has now established a policy for all such matters to be submitted in writing for a committee decision. All parties involved will be given an opportunity to reply to issues in writing and all those involved will be invited to attend a special committee meeting to discuss and possibly resolve any misunderstandings. After considering all the issues, including those of the Society, a final decision will be made by the Management Committee.

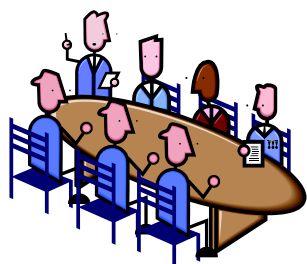
One of the biggest issues which the Society is facing is the change from one person controlling everything the Society does, to that where the Management Committee is the governance while the General Manager manages the day to day running of the railway. In our case Dennis Blake has been appointed by the Management Committee to manage the railway. This means that Dennis is in charge of the Station Master and all daily operational staff. He also authorises any traffic movement or track repairs. Any item of rolling stock has to have Dennis's seal of approval before being allowed on the lines which covers the Rail Safety Certification process, the operational procedures, who is allowed to operate it, and where it must be stored or based etc.

The Management Committee **governs** the buildings, land, rolling stock, leases and finances. It is in this power that the Management Committee is just about to sign off on a 31 year concession arrangement with the Department of Conservation who actually own the land we have our railway sitting on. And before anyone starts getting all agitated, this issue goes right back to the way the original Society was established which means we have inherited the problem. Our costs will rise as the basic rental is 4% of our annual income excluding donations, grants and membership fees. The Management Committee have decided that this is the best way forward while giving the Society a secure tenure of the land.

April and May promise to be very busy with demands on members for their time and services being huge due to events and major track reconstruction of the reverse curves. If members don't get in and do their bit, we have to pay contractors which leave less money for other Society demands. Get the message, or do I use a bigger hammer!

Don't wait to be asked, members can jump in to help both Dennis and the Society by thinking about what needs to be done and putting it before the Committee for approval. If it is just a matter of common sense with no cost to the Society or interfering with what others are doing, ask and it shall be your job to do. There is an old military saying, "If it stands still, paint it. If it is moving, nail it to the floor and then paint it".

Graeme Martin



Meet Your Committee:

<p>Chris Hale Treasurer</p>	<p>QUESTIONS</p>	<p>Neil Copeman Technology/Computer Systems</p>
<p>I work for Hauraki District Council as the Economic Development Officer.</p> <p>Married to Liz with two adult children and 1 grandson at the moment</p>	<p><i>Occupation and family</i></p>	<p>Retired Farmer, married with two children Edna-Rose and Gavin.</p> <p>Married: Pam Copeman</p>
<p>I have a small lifestyle block and enjoy playing Golf, spending time with family and anything sport related.</p> <p>Have always been involved with one or more community organisations. Have been with Goldfields for past 9 years as Chairman of the Operations Board more recently as Treasurer</p>	<p><i>What are your interests?</i></p>	<p>Building and fixing computers</p>
<p>Have been in Waihi since 1969 and found it a great place to bring up the children. Love the lifestyle</p>	<p><i>Why do you live in the Waihi area?</i></p>	<p>Because we like living near the railway as Neil has a keen interest in trains</p>
<p>Gisborne to Wellington Railcar going to College - the Mohaka Viaduct.</p> <p>The Taieri Gorge Railway on a Mystery trip with Liz to Dunedin</p>	<p><i>What is your Best Train Experience?</i></p>	<p>Riding on the Tranz Alpine Express from Christchurch to Greymouth</p>
<p>An exciting, well run commercial operation that enables Society members to be involved in maintaining and restoring the unique rail heritage of Goldfields Railway</p>	<p><i>What is your Vision for Goldfields Railway?</i></p>	<p>That it continues to grow and steam returns to the Waihi Line.</p> <p>Neil would like to thank all those who have sent kind wishes to him at this time and thanks them for their love and support.</p>



New Members to the Society:

Welcome our new members to the Society:



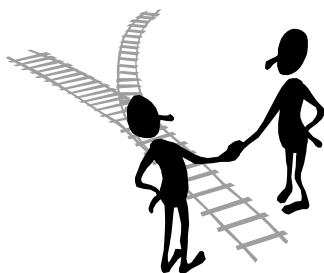
Lisa Worthington - Waihi



Tony Holmes - Palmerston North

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

Know Your Society:



All members should be aware by now that there is what we call a **“Tool Box”** meeting run by the General Manager at 8.30am to discuss operational and health and safety aspects of the railway. The date for these meetings is the Saturday before our Management Committee meeting. It is also an opportunity for operational staff to bring up any matter about work place safety for both staff and passengers. Actually this is compulsory for operational staff both by Health & Safety legislation and our rail safety planning.

Following this meeting, there is always a working bee under the General Manager to do all those odd jobs that rostered and restoration staff having trouble finding time for. At around 12.30pm we finish up for the day with a food & social time for all the workers. All we are asking for is three and a half hours of your time.

The 3rd Tuesday in every month from 4pm to 6pm the **“Management Committee”** meets to deal with the Society’s affairs, and also reflect on matters raised at the Tool Box.

Any member is entitled to attend any meeting, and in fact I encourage all members to attend to actually see what we are all doing. Both these meetings are held in the Lunch Room at the Station.

The dates for the next few Tool Box/Working Bee meetings are:

17th April

15th May

12th June

Mystery Buyer Surveys:

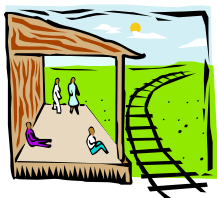


As a way to improve our image and marketing opportunities, we will all experience the visits from mystery passengers who will be observing how we do things, and suggest how we can do things better. At no stage will any members be identified and the actual information will be kept confidential

The Project Manager will be providing a compilation of survey results to the Promotions Sub-Committee which will be included in discussion papers on ways to improve our promotions and customer experience.

Passengers on the Trains:

These numbers include those from both the Waihi and Waikino stations:



	Return			
	Adults	Kids	Snrs	Family
February	481	49	374	26
March	396	107	307	31

	One Way			
	Adults	Kids	Snrs	Family
February	40	16	125	4
March	88	51	71	2

In addition to the above we had the following passenger groups/tours:

	February '10	March '10
Scenic Tours (one way)	551	392
Other Tour Companies		
- Return	11	45
- One Way	91	55
Schools - Return		219
- One Way	60	114
Education Passes	-	30

Support our Community Day:

ANZAC DAY

Sunday, 25th April 2010



Anzac Day provides an ideal opportunity to recognise the RSA veterans from the Waihi area and the sacrifices they have made.

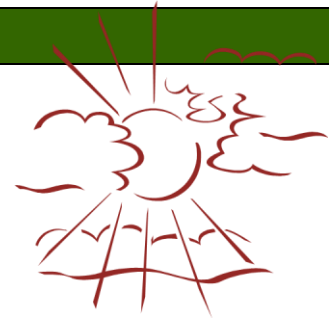
In support of the RSA veterans Goldfields Railways is putting on a 'theme day' for the trains running that day,

Waihi:	11.45 am	and	1.45 pm
Waikino:	1.00 pm	and	2.30 pm

Special concession tickets are available for RSA members and their extended family and can be purchased from the Waihi RSA and the Waihi Information Centre

Track Maintenance/Repairs:

Subject to suitable weather conditions, it is anticipated that the train will not be operating from 17th to 29th May 2010 to enable ongoing maintenance work can be carried out on the track. The train will of course will run for any group bookings that have been confirmed. Please feel free to contact the Station (07-863-9020) to check if you are wanting to ride the train during this period.



A Day In the Life of

A Guard on Goldfields Railway:

(Lisa Worthington)



I greet my passengers young and old, from Tourists to locals. They come from far and even farther.

To the children I'd say "*All aboard*" . . . (they like that!)

To the adults I'd say "*You may embark*", Some will smile and board, others will look puzzled; to those I smile and guide them on. Once we are all set I blow my whistle and hold out my flag to let the driver know we are ready, he'll give a toot I then board and hold out my flag to say it's safe to go, I must say I do love doing that.

I introduce myself to my passengers and give them a quick history lesson of our Railway and surrounding Goldmine. I am there to answer any questions they may have and to make their venture a safe and happy one. To the children I point out our little stuffed animals along the way. The adults are relaxed and happy to mingle with others as they take in the beautiful scenery on the way.

All our trips are fun; there is always humour, from the odd corny jokes that some will tell to the quick witty Englishmen who makes those corny jokes even funnier by dissecting them to being factual.

Being a Guard you get to meet people from all over the world as well as New Zealand. We learn from each other. Its great meeting different cultures and the elderly have many stories of their own to tell, some whom have travelled our Railway when they were young. Ohhh and the children, (especially the little boys) who turn up wearing their Thomas T shirts, Thomas shoes and even Thomas bags. I remember quite a few who ask me "*Where is that fat Controller?*". I tell them the fat controller is really a women and I have lost weight. Others who have seen the movie "Polar Express" and expect me to click shapes of animals into their tickets, to them I say "*I'm still learning*" and give them a Thomas stamp instead.

Everyone who is interested in trains is welcome to view our special little steam Peckett and all our other rolling stock carriages that are being lovingly restored by our hard working volunteers. Our Peckett is a 'Thomas' look alike; children love it and parents have taken many photos. As they are leaving I will hear the odd child say "*That's not Thomas, it had the No.2 on it*". I tell them that its Thomas's long lost cousin 'Timothy'.

So you see why I love being a Guard on Goldfields Railway, every day is different; the people, different stories, different humour, and most of all lots of fun.

If I was to sum up a Guard's Job with just one word it word have to be "Entertaining"

A Track Worker for Goldfields Railway:

(Graeme Martin - President)

Who could imagine me spending a day on the track, not me anyway? However Dennis, Terrance and Ashton headed off to replace the buttress of the Waitete Bridge, so I tagged along. The delightful man on the digger (Carters Contracting) dug a big hole and exposed the rotten buttress wall. Now we believe the inspector!

We had the best gear we could have, which wasn't much, but lots of concrete sleepers, some knowledge, willing hands, desire to learn new skills, a digger, several shovels, lots of earth and rocks, and a big hole to fill.

I am not skilled so left all the brain work to Dennis and just helped where I could. One thing I do love is watching things get built.

Seeing something develop out of just a pile of bits and pieces which in individual pieces makes no sense, but as a result of putting them together, something marvellous is created. Just watching this team working together, each confident in the others' abilities and skills was a real thrill for me.

My 'job' was to stand on the wagon of sleepers, and hook each one onto the excavator arm as it came back for some more. This was very simple, all I had to do was slide the clips into the old pandrol loops and stand back out of the way as the sleeper was swept out over the embankment and carefully adjusted into place.

These guys have to be situationally aware as collecting a 256lb sleeper while standing some 15 feet above the ground would be rather painful. Just think of the all the paper work and me a work place health & safety rep too.

I was actually surprised how quickly the time went and somewhat disappointed when the last bucketful of fill went into place and the last new sleeper was inserted. While working very hard in the hot sun, I can now understand what a sense of achievement and personal ownership these track gangs must feel when they have successfully completed repair of a section of track.

This article is my thanks to the track gang team and to share with members just a small sample of the incredible and often unappreciated work that these guys have to experience every day.



Update on Restoration Projects: *Bob Morton, Don Martin, Allan Carter*

■ *Tauranga Car*



The second side is now being stripped ready for restoration.

All the double seats are being taken out ready for cleaning and restoration. The polished panelling on the inside is going back in, and the rest of the panelling is being restored ready for installation.

■ *Laying of Concrete in the Train Shed:*

The laying of the concrete on the 'restoration' side of the shed has been carried out and which makes it a lot easier and safer to work on the carriages now. Our thanks must go to the people who supported us and carried out the work including: Dingo Diggers, Paeroa Concrete, John Anderson and the Volunteer Restoration Team.



Pouring the Concrete



John laying concrete
(with the assistance of some 'observers')



Returning the carriage to the shed with the 'use' of Allan's Ute after the concrete set

■ **1944 Prices' Shunter** (Phil Boyd and Brian Rae)

Phil reports that it has been a while since much work has been done on the Shunter. However work has commenced again. The buffer mounting plates have been removed and taken to Porters Engineering for straightening. The rear frame plates have been fitted. Also most of the rust in the cab has been cut out and new plates welded in.

Phil recently acquired from Pam Mercer and her family at Waitawheta their old Isuzu truck which the family donated to Goldfields Railway. Phil intends to use the 6 cylinder diesel motor and fit it into the Shunter. Work has now commenced on making up the engine mountings.

WANTED:

**We are sweating down here;
We need volunteers to save our souls!**



How about some bodies to fill spaces for drivers, guards, platform attendants, cleaners, general dogs bodies, trades people - no matter, how fit you are or what you think you are not good at, we will find a space for you. We now have a training programme for specialist roles and Syd Haggie is looking for people to help him make sure our customers have a good time while at the station.

Contact Sherryl or Syd Haggie (Phone: 863-9020) now *thank you*

Winter Timetable:

As from 1st May the winter timetable will be used, that is:

Trains will run Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday only (unless we have a specific booking)

From Waihi:	10.00 am	11.45 am	1.45 pm
From Waikino:	11.00 am	1.00 pm	2.30 pm



Although it may be if there are no passengers the last train of the day may not run. So if you are intending to catch the last train it would pay to ring the office (07-863-9020) just to make sure the train is running.



Responses from some of our Passengers:

We have had some very encouraging support from our passengers over the summer months, including the following:

Howick Club - Ladies Section: (Diane Coultas)

Hi Sherryl

Just a brief note to say thank you for making our day out on Sunday 28th such an enjoyable experience. I was unable to come on the day so missed out on what sounded like lots of fun and good food. Could you please pass our thanks on to the Waikino Station Café .

We will certainly plan for another visit sometime in the future.

*Kind Regards
Diane*

English & Cultural Programme, Bethlehem College, Tauranga: (Mrs Sarisa Voraphakhun)

Dear Sherryl,

Thank you so much for the lovely day today, both at the station and on the train. The kids did have a good time. It was a very good experience for them, and of course, very memorable.

Warm Wishes,

Comments from Our Visitors Book through the January to March 2010 period

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| ■ Great trip - really enjoyed it : | Whangarei |
| ■ Fantastic - loved it | India |
| ■ Good fun | Isle of Man |
| ■ First Rate | England |
| ■ Cute train | Auckland |
| ■ Wonderful | Canada |
| ■ Great Work being Done | East Sussex, England |
| ■ Great Railway - All the best to all, thanks | Lincoln, U.K. |
| ■ Well worth it | Massey, Waitakere |
| ■ A huge effort - well done | Welcome Bay, Tauranga |
| ■ Preserve it at all costs | Wellington |
| ■ Great Assistants | Palmerston North |
| ■ Excellent Trip - Lisa made it very interesting | London, UK |
| ■ Memories Recalled | Whakatane |
| ■ Takes me back | Australia |
| ■ Fabulous - guard made it interesting | England |
| ■ A great experience - wonderful | Auckland |
| ■ Great - hope you find more funding - good luck | Australia |
| ■ Great experience - helpful staff | Wellington |



Dear Sherryl

*Please find attached copy of John Dengate's "Waihi - Waikino Train" poem. We all so enjoyed our time with you and Graeme this morning. We learned so much more about the background to the little train which provides us with so much pleasure and are very grateful to Graeme for spending so much time with us.
Warm regards, Lynnette, Richard and Aussie mate, John Dengate
19 March 2010*

Waihi - Waikino Train

Across the gullies, 'round the hills, where cold, clear mountain water spills;
By leafy groves, where branches sway, the little train goes on its way.

Waihi - Waikino, there and back; it rattles on its iron track.
The river singing down below ... the sweetest journey that I know.

Europe's wonders, I disdain; I much prefer that little train.
I travel on it every year; I share the trip with friends, so dear.

We breathe great gulps of pristine air; there's laughter in the love we share.
Around a bend, the engine coasts ... I fancy I can feel the ghosts
Of tough, hard-bitten miners, bold, who gouged the earth for gleaming gold.

But, oh, these ghosts are friendly chaps; they smoke their pipes and doff their caps.
They smile and wave and swig black tea and dance an Irish jig for me.
"Good-bye," they chortle, fading fast, these miners, from New Zealand's past.

I fancy, too, that I can hear the chants of warriors, hov'ring near;
Maori folk, serene and strong; they watch us as we roll along.

The Paris Metro, I rode 'round; I travelled the London underground.
I've journeyed north through sunny Spain, from Barcelona, on the train.

I've sped south on a French express at speeds that I can only guess:
But, every March, I heed the call to ride the train that tops them all -
The little train that carries me between Waikino and Waihi.

Written by John Dengate,
Australian poet, folk-singer / writer,
November 2008



John Dengate
with friend, Richard (right)
- Early March 2010

OPEN DAY : Easter Saturday



This proved to be a very successful “Family” fun day out, with lots of adults and children coming and going the whole day. One of the big successes of the day was the jigger rides, and throughout the whole day there was always someone on the jigger. We had Terrance monitoring the rides and when he wasn't giving people rides, he was walking beside them making sure everyone was safe and secure. Dennis' miniature train was a hit with the children (and some so called 'adults') as well. The children were the ones that were keen to cut rail track - (showing up the adults who weren't keen at all) we had a couple of 'little people' who spent ages using the cutting equipment (always in the sight of adults) and there was no way that they were going to stop before they had cut right through the steel. One little fellow in particular would have spent a good deal of the afternoon cutting his piece, and he went home very happy with his piece of

rail (got a sausage and drink as reward for his efforts!).

It was certainly a worthwhile day and good to see so many people there, including members and families. Many thanks to all who supported us.

Reports written and submitted by Rob Bowater:

“HELP” WE’VE MISSED THE TRAIN!

Train “nuts” aren't often late to catch a train but they certainly did on March 20 when they missed the 2.30 from Waikino.

At the invitation of our steam investigating committee three Waikato Branch of the N.Z. Railway & Locomotive Society committee members and John Pudsey one of our ex Peckett drivers and qualified fitter/turner from Tauranga spent the day here. The Waikato trio comprised their President Ron Brown (a Goldfields honorary life and steam committee member), John Bates and David Cummins. They were accompanied for the day with Bill Harris and myself. Brian Rae was to be there too. but sadly, he had to work.

Having been at the Victoria Battery Tramway in the early afternoon, the party was returning on foot to the Waikino station when their train tooted and departed. Despite the Tramway's General Manager, Mike Lathwell's valiant efforts to communicate by radio telephone to the Waikino Café to hold the train up this failed. So at the station it meant a frantic phone call to Brian Rae via his wife, Janelle, to pick us up in his van. It was nice chatting in the sun on the station platform before Brian's 'taxi' arrived and he was able to be with us for the remainder of the eventful day. We understand that president Graeme, who was working on the train that afternoon, was going to send a “special” back to pick us up. Thanks for the good intention Graeme. Fortunately the train communication worked ok.

Earlier at the Waihi station morning tea was served along with homemade scones topped with cream and jam. President Graeme, General Manager Dennis Blake. Stationmaster Sherryl Sutherland joined us for a friendly chat with our guests. Dennis then escorted our visitors through the workshop so they could see the restoration work. It was then on to the 11.45 a.m. train to Waikino and a walk over to the Battery site for a mine train ride, a museum tour and to see the historic ore roasting kilns. A quick sandwich lunch was provided before boarding the train back to the lower station and the walk over the Ohinemuri back to 'Kino'.

After returning to Waihi the group went to Phil Boyd's to see his restoration of our rail tractor - the "Flyer". Here Rod Rattray joined us and Phil explained to all what he done to date. It was then to my home where a barbeque was prepared and Vice-President Colin Dray was welcomed .Our guests had access to folders on the Peckett and Fa250 locos plus various other historical railway scrapbooks.

Thanks to Janelle and my wife Annette for their efforts in preparing all the food for the day. I am sure all appreciated the home baking- even Arthur and P.J who no doubt were surprised to find scones on the lunchroom table when their train returned to Waihi.

P.S. The Waikato members who came here make up half their committee for the Branch which owns steam loco Fa250 at present partially restored and unwanted at the Waitara Railway Preservation Society. It is one of the options we are looking at.

I am sure our guests returned to Hamilton with a better insight into Goldfields' present operation and enjoyed our hospitality.



SUCCESFUL FILM NIGHT START (written on Brian Rae's behalf - organiser of the evening)

Despite a low turnout of members attending our first social film evening on February 27 it was a good start. Big things have small beginnings!

Black and white stills of N.Z.R. steam locomotives were screened during the informal chat time. Following on were two DVD's featuring Goldfields railway in the 1990's with the Peckett in full steam with some familiar faces. Clips of other N.Z. Rail activity at that time were also screened. A homemade supper, with all the ingredients donated, was prepared by Janelle Rae and Annette Bowater. Several of the attendees brought extras along and it all went down well.

The gold coin donations went towards purchasing stamps for letters to other groups enquiring about the availability of steam locos. Thanks must go to the Waihi Museum & Arts Centre for the free use of their facilities -it is appreciated. With this one under our belt, another one is being arranged for 19 June 2010.

Next Railway Social Film Evening:

Saturday, 19 June at 7.00 pm

Waihi Arts Centre & Museum, Kenny Street, Waihi

Full details will be in the next issue of our Newsletter.

Everyone is welcome, so bring your partners, family, friends etc.

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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 and events held. *Thank you everyone*

These include:

- Sel Baker
- Adams Electrical
- Karen Signs
- Mike Curtis - Clark & Gay, Solicitors, Waihi
- Carters Contractors
- Curtis Garden Centre
- Porter Engineering
- Pam Mercer and Family
- Rod Rattray
- Paeroa Concrete
- Dingo Diggers
- John Anderson
- Waihi Farm Services
- Waihi Museum & Arts Centre
- James Say Trust
- Valder Ohinemuri Charitable Trust
- NZ Lottery Grants Board
- Westpac
- And of course as always our thanks goes to the many volunteers that are involved in running the trains, restoration work etc.



From the Pages of Our History:

THE WAIHI-PAEROA RAILWAY LINE

Taken from the publication:

Gold Country -

'A journey through the pioneering country of Ohinemuri and beyond'

By: Henry Rawle

Waihi, December 1985

Printed by Goldfields Print Ltd, Paeroa

The historic line was phased out with the opening of the Kaimai tunnel in 1978 but the energy and foresight of tourist-orientated groups has ensured the public will continue to have access to one of the most picturesque stretches of railway line in the country.

Today vintage trains cover the Waihi end of the track, while a walkway follows the course of the old line through rugged Karangahake Gorge and the 1090 metre railway tunnel out to the Crown battery.

The railway reached Paeroa in 1893 but faced with the rocky obstacle of the gorge bluffs, the decision to extend the line to Waihi was deferred for many years.

It was pressure from Waihi mining companies, backed by threats to build the line themselves, that finally forced the Government to drive a tunnel through the hills and complete the 21 kilometre track from Paeroa to Waihi.

Tunnelling started in 1900 and a combined road and rail bridge was erected at the Karangahake entrance. The line from Paeroa to the tunnel mouth was opened for goods traffic in 1904 and the Karangahake railway station was built across the river, later providing a passenger platform and two sidings capable of holding 65 wagons.

The tunnel was through by 1905 and the line was officially opened in November 9 of that year.

The completion of the Kaimai tunnel 73 years later marked the end of an era for the historic line yet only a farewell whistle blast signalled the departure of the last train from Waihi.

The absence of ceremony was in marked contrast to the jubilation which greeted the opening of the Paeroa-Waihi line.

Two 'specials' ran from Thames to the new Waihi railway station where hundreds of excited onlookers waved flats and cheered as the first train rolled up to the platform drawn by two glistening locomotives.

The novelty and sense of pride engendered by the first steam trains lasted for many years. Excursions were popular, whistles blowing, wheel-tappers bustling to and fro and the great engines hissing steam and smoke from their balloon funnels.

The first locomotives were small 'F' and "Fa" tank engines made at Price's foundry at Thames. A railway timetable dated 1912 reveals there were six passenger and freight trains running every day, the journey taking 55 minutes with several stops along the way.

In later years the faster and more powerful 'J' class engines took over and it was not unusual to see these locomotives hauling up to a hundred wagons.

Diesel replaced steam, road haulage challenged the railways for goods transport and the Waihi-Paeroa line became one of the many to be declared redundant.

Weeds grew waist-high along the track; the rusting rails were sold for scrap. The iron road which once reached out into a bright new future looked back on a nostalgic past.

It was due to the efforts of a handful of local train enthusiasts that at least part of the historic line was saved for future generations to enjoy.