

# FRONZ: JOURNAL

Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand Incorporated

## LAST CALL FOR 2023 FRONZ AWARD ENTRIES !!

Entries for the 2023 FRONZ awards close this weekend, so please submit any entries/nominations as soon as possible.

It is with a sad heart that we acknowledge the passing of Mike Anderson at the young age of 52 after a short illness. Mike was a founding member of the Diesel Traction Group, served on the FRONZ Executive, and was recently the Chair of the Heritage Technical Committee. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his family, and his Diesel Traction Group family.

There is a service being held at the LaVida Centre, 34A Hansons Lane, Upper Riccarton at 1:30pm on Tuesday the 2nd of May.

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# FRONZ CONFERENCE 2023

**Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand Incorporated**

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The FRONZ conference over King's Birthday weekend next year (doesn't that sound strange!), is confirmed as being in the Bay of Islands, with the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway being our hosts.

We appreciate that, like Invercargill, it is a long way for many of our members to travel. However, this part of the country is so rich in New Zealand history, that for those of you that haven't been that far north before, it is definitely worth making the effort. Rather than just coming for the three days of conference, why not take a mini-holiday with us beforehand, and enjoy a few days of touring and socialising pre-conference.

For the FRONZ conference in 2023 FRONZ is proud to offer the following options:

1. Join our mini-holiday (see details below) and arrive in Kerikeri on Monday 29th May 2023 for four days exploring Northland before conference.
2. Arrive on Thursday 1st June and on Friday visit the historic sights of Waitangi Treaty Grounds and Russell, visiting the birthplace of our nation.
3. Attend for the conference only, arriving on Friday 2nd June and staying through to Monday 5th June. (Options as per past conferences)





# CONFERENCE VENUE AND ACCOMMODATION

The venue for the conference is the Copthorne Hotel at Waitangi. Many of you may know this hotel by its former name of Waitangi Hotel. It is right on the waterfront next to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds and has beautiful gardens and view across the harbour to Russell. It is an international four-star hotel, and has ideal conference facilities to host our event. We have been able to negotiate good room rates which include breakfast, with rooms being held for us at these rates until mid-April only. (See below for details).

The Copthorne Hotel is close to Paihia, although it is two kilometres to the heart of Paihia where most of the restaurants and bars are. We have been able to negotiate a courtesy coach which will be available to take you into (and from) the heart of Paihia each half hour between five and nine o'clock at night. In addition, FRONZ will be hiring a van so we can do airport transfers to and from Kerikeri Airport and run-abouts as required. There is a Countdown supermarket within easy walking distance of the hotel should you want to get any supplies. If preferred, you can book accommodation elsewhere in Paihia, but you will be responsible for making your own way to and from the conference venue.

Whichever conference option you intend to take we strongly recommend that if you will be flying to the conference, that you book your flights as early as possible. Kerikeri is the closest airport, which is 22 kilometres from the venue. Currently return fares to and from Kerikeri from Wellington and Christchurch can be attained in the low \$300 range. There are only four or five flights into and out of Kerikeri each day, so fares will increase if you purchase your flight closer to the time of travel.



Photo: Millenium Hotels website

## OPTION 1 - MINI HOLIDAY — HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTHLAND (MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY)

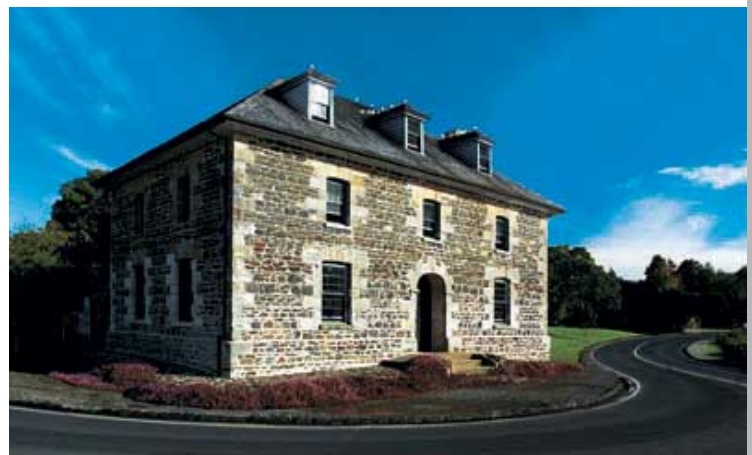
Margaret Gordon (the FRONZ Executive Officer) and husband John, together with Alan Verry (RES), will be the tour hosts for these few days.

The itinerary is as follows:

**Day 1 – Monday 29th May** – Arrive in Bay of Islands. If you are flying in, you will be picked up and transported to your accommodation.

**Day 2 – Tuesday 30th May** – In the morning we will embark upon the four and a half hour “Dolphin Cruise to the Hole in the Rock”. This will take in the stunning views of the island in the bay and glide through the islands and along the Rakaumangamanga Peninsula to Cape Brett, where a historic lighthouse keeps watch over Piercy Island, or as it is popularly known as the “Hole in the Rock”. The cruise will include a BBQ lunch. In the afternoon you will have free time to explore Paihia, or you may wish to visit the iconic Kerikeri Stone Store. We will have a hire van available for transport as required. Built in 1832, the Georgian-style Stone Store was originally a Missionary Society warehouse but assumed various roles including a trading post, library, barracks and boys’ school. It also served as a general store, a tradition that continues today in the atmospheric ground-floor gift shop.

A browser’s delight, the shop stocks an amazing range of authentic goods reminiscent of those traded in the early 19th century, alongside unique New Zealand merchandise. Museum displays can be viewed upstairs.



Photos: Left: Hole In The Rock - Stuff. Right: Kerikeri Stone Store - [honeheke.co.nz](http://honeheke.co.nz)

**Day 3 – Wednesday 31st May** – Cape Reinga and Ninety Mile Beach Tour – this will be an early morning start which will take us on a journey to the very tip of the North Island, uncovering a region of rich Maori tradition along the way. We will travel along the sand-swept shore of Ninety Mile Beach in a purpose-built coach. For those that are adventurous, there is the opportunity to climb the massive sand dunes at Te Paki Stream and experience the thrill of sand boarding.

Stand at the northernmost part of New Zealand and take in the panoramic views. From beneath the iconic lighthouse watch the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean collide far below, and take in the power of this special place.

The tour will include a delicious lunch prepared from locally prepared produce.

**Day 4 – Thursday 1st June** – Explore the Hokianga – we will be hiring a coach just for our party and travelling from the east coast to the west coast of Northland to visit the beautiful Hokianga Harbour, with its beaches of golden sand. We will visit Tane Mahuta, the awe-inspiring giant kauri tree in the Waipoua Forest. Lunch, which is included, will be at The Head Hotel on the waterfront on the harbour.

In the afternoon we will visit Manea: Footprints of Kupe, which offers a unique cultural encounter sharing the stories and traditions of Kupe and his descendants.

**Day 5 – Friday 2nd June** – Historic Northland – the Birth of our Nation – from the hotel we will stroll across to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds next door, and have a few hours to enjoy all that this historic place has to offer including a guided tour, cultural performances and a carving studio. Visit the Treaty House, Te Whare Runanga (a carved meeting house), see the iconic flagstaff and take in all that this site has to offer. Around midday we will catch the ferry across to Russell. You will have time for lunch in one of the numerous cafes or other eating places (own expense) before embarking on a minibus tour of Russell, taking you around all the famous sights and providing details of Russell's rich history. There will be time to cruise the lovely shops there, visit Pompallier Mission House or perhaps just enjoy a quiet one on the veranda of the famous Duke of Marlborough Hotel. We return late afternoon in time to register for the conference.



Photos: Left: Cape Reinga - [doc.govt.nz](http://doc.govt.nz). Right: Ninety Mile Beach - [worldbeachguide.com](http://worldbeachguide.com)



## OPTION 2 – FRIDAY 2ND JUNE – WAITANGI TREATY GROUNDS AND RUSSELL

This is the same as Day 5 of the mini-holiday.

## OPTION 3 – CONFERENCE ONLY (SATURDAY TO MONDAY)

The conference will follow the normal format of sessions all day Saturday, the AGM and further sessions on Sunday morning, followed by a tour to one of our members in the afternoon. This will involve taking a coach to Whangarei to visit the Whangarei Steam and Model Railway Club. There we will be able to ride their trains, trams and get absorbed with their model railway exhibition. On the way back we will swing by the old Whangarei Railway Station and see the amazing restoration that has recently been completed thanks to the hard work of the local Menzshed supported by funding from the Rail Heritage Trust.

Monday will be a visit to our conference hosts, the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway at Kawakawa. Take time to ride the train and wander through their workshops and hear about the future developments that are in the planning stage.



Photos: Bay Of Islands Vintage Railway - Facebook



Photos: Left: Whangarei Railway Station - nzherald.co.nz. Right - Whangarei Steam and Model Railway Club - steamnorth.co.nz

# COSTS

## Accommodation

The table below shows the various options that are available at the Copthorne Hotel at Waitangi, as long as you book before Friday 14th April. After that time the rooms that are being held for FRONZ will be released back to the market. Note that these special rates will apply from Monday 29th May to Tuesday 6th June inclusive. All rates INCLUDE breakfast. Prices include GST.

Room Type	Single Occupancy	Double Occupancy
Standard Garden View Room	\$178	\$215
Superior Harbour View Room	\$191	\$228
Superior Plus Water View Room	\$210	\$247
Suite	\$268	\$305

## Mini-Holiday

The cost per person for days one to five inclusive is \$650. This includes the tours outlined for the four days from Tuesday to Friday, and the airport transfer to the Copthorne Hotel (if required). Three lunches (Tuesday to Thursday) are included. It does not include the accommodation cost or the cost of travel to the Bay of Islands.

## Historic Northland (Friday only)

The cost is \$75 for the day and includes entry to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, the ferry to Russell and the minibus tour in Russell. Lunch is at your own expense.

## Conference

The full conference, including the Sunday excursion to Whangarei and the Awards Night dinner, but excluding the Monday trip to Kawakawa costs \$355.00 per person. The full list of optional extras and part options for conference are available on the registration page.

## Saturday option for partners not attending conference

We will have a van available that will seat 10-12 passengers. Partners may enjoy a trip to visit Kerikeri for shopping and a long lunch. This will be complimentary (but not the lunch!). There is also Parrot World in Kerikeri that is worth a visit, if anyone is interested.



## ACTIONS REQUIRED

If you are interested in this option, can you please email the FRONZ Executive Officer Margaret Gordon directly. Let her know how many of you will be travelling, and whether you intend to fly to Kerikeri or arrive by car. This will help in determining airport logistics. Margaret's email address is [marjohnzoe@gmail.com](mailto:marjohnzoe@gmail.com).

If you have any questions about the holiday then feel free to contact her directly on 0278329777.

This trip will require a non-refundable deposit of \$100 per person upon registering. All prices quoted include GST.

To register for conference, please visit [fronz.org.nz/conferences/register](http://fronz.org.nz/conferences/register)



Photos: Left: Hokianga Harbour - [visitboi.co.nz](http://visitboi.co.nz) Right: Russell - [russellnz.co.nz](http://russellnz.co.nz)



Photos: Left: Tane Mahuta Walk - [doc.govt.nz](http://doc.govt.nz) Right: Manea - Footprints Of Kupe - [aa.co.nz](http://aa.co.nz)



## 2023 RESTORATION AWARD

The Rail Heritage is seeking nominations for the 2023 Restoration Award.

The Award is open to any group or organisation, commercial or voluntary, for the restoration of any building or structure that was designed or built for railway operating purposes and is of heritage significance.

Entries close on 30 April 2023.

For further information and the Award criteria please contact the Rail Heritage Trust at: [railheritage@railheritage.org.nz](mailto:railheritage@railheritage.org.nz) or phone 04 498 3089

## MEMBERS WE HAVE LOST

At this year's FRONZ conference we'll be running our slideshow that acknowledges the members lost since June 2022.

If your group has lost a special/devote/long-serving member and would like them acknowledged in this annual tribute, please email a photo, their name and group they were involved with to [secretary@fronz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@fronz.org.nz)

## CLIMATE CHANGE/SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

In mid-April FRONZ hosted Jarrod Coburn from DTG (and other roles) on sustainable business planning for heritage rail groups. It was a really good chat and a big thanks to Jarrod, Jeff for circulating the event and those who attended.

In recent months I've been in touch with Strasburg Railway, Kent and East Sussex Railway, National Traction Engine Trust and the Haehaeata Natural Heritage Trust and I'll write up what they've had to say. While there is some sorting to be done all the information collected so far is available [here](#).

I'll be speaking at conference in June on the subject and if you've got anything you'd like me to focus on or questions in general flick me a message at [danarmstrongnz@gmail.com](mailto:danarmstrongnz@gmail.com)

**ANNOUNCED AT THE 2022 FRONZ CONFERENCE  
AND NOW AVAILABLE!**



# Happy 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday TR56

A colouring in story book.

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FRONZ members wholesale price **\$5.00**

Recommended retail price **\$12.00**

Minimum order 20 books

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Orders to the Rail Heritage Trust at [railheritage@railheritage.org.nz](mailto:railheritage@railheritage.org.nz)



ŌTIRA  
TUNNEL  
4 AUGUST 1923



LINKING  
EAST  
AND  
WEST  
FOR  
100  
YEARS  
1923-2023

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

4<sup>th</sup> August 2023

For more information:

FB – Ōtira Tunnel Commemorations 2023

Email – [otiratunnel2023@gmail.com](mailto:otiratunnel2023@gmail.com)

Register – [www.eventbrite.co.nz](http://www.eventbrite.co.nz)

Travel to the event by train –

[www.greatjourneysnz.com/gifts-and-specials-otira.co.nz](http://www.greatjourneysnz.com/gifts-and-specials-otira.co.nz)

## LAST CALL FOR THIS V-CLASS UNDERFRAME & PONY TRUCK

This is your last chance to adopt this V-Class Underframe and Pony Truck before we scrap it. If you would like to pay scrap price for this relic of New Zealand Railways please email [chairman@steamrail.nz](mailto:chairman@steamrail.nz)

## 1ST CLASS SEATS OPEN TO OFFERS

You can jump on this opportunity to grab some vintage 1st New Zealand Railways seats. We have approximately 30 seats surplus to requirements, they must go. The seats are in varying condition and would make a great restoration project. Email [chairman@steamrail.nz](mailto:chairman@steamrail.nz) to make an offer or for more information



# OTAGO HERITAGE BUS SOCIETY

*Summer Newsletter 2023/1*

## **New Driver.**

It seems to be the time for our society to be making a lot of historical firsts. One of the advantages of owning a fleet of roadworthy buses is that they can be used to enable members to obtain their passenger licence or "P" endorsement.

Our hard-working secretary and treasurer Shirley Woodrow has recently joined our driving ranks and has had much practice in ferrying folk to all manner of places in all manner of vehicles. So far Shirley has resisted the temptation to get behind the wheel of the bendi-bus about I'm sure that will happen in good time. Congratulations Shirley.

## **September 26th 2022: Farm Tours at Invermay.**

A fine Monday saw the culmination of a weekend celebrations to mark the 50th Anniversary of Invermay Agricultural Research centre. As part of their celebrations, a bus was hired to take participants for a tour of the farm and activities. 170 did the honours and added to its very diverse CV; with it having been used for all manner of things from advertising ice-cream to Mystery Nights at the Historic Careys Bay Hotel and now farm bus. Two round trips were involved and 170 coped as it always does, without fuss or bother.

## **October 14-16th 2022: On location.**

On the weekend of October 14-16th 2022, some of our now unique buses were hired for the making of the film One Winter about the story of the effects of the 1981 Springbok Tour on Dunedin's people. The setting was Dunedin in 1981 and we were able to supply some suitable vehicles to fit this time frame. Four vehicles were involved in all over three days for filming. Bond and Water Streets were transformed into an authentic Dunedin of some 41 years ago. The pictures show how a trip back in time can be undertaken when the correct props are on hand.

## **December 15-18th: Christmas Lights.**

For the second year, we teamed up with Otago Museum to provide tours to visit selected displays of Christmas lights in the area. Andrew carefully chose a route which broke new ground in that we visited several superb displays in the Mosgiel area as well as some old favourites plus new ones in Dunedin city itself.

This event has proved to be a hit with the public and plans are already being discussed as to making this event better to retain its popular appeal.



Left: Shirley at the wheel of the popular 'Purple bus' in the Octagon on Cruise Ship shuttles. Right: Bus 402 noses into the picture during one of the viewing stops on the Christmas Light tours.



# STEAM INCORPORATED

*Photos: Bobby Boulton*

The Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer hauled by Ab 608 & Da 1431 was a massive success, along with the weekend excursions around the Christchurch area.

Ab 608 then visited the Weka Pass Railway.



Left: The Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer crossing the Wairau River, Spring Creek. Right: Hawkswood.



Left: North of Hapuku, looking towards Mangamanu Bay. Right: the Dashwood Pass.



Left: The Alpine Ranger at St Bernards Saddle, near Craigieburn. Right: Ab608 at the Weka Pass Railway on a freight service for their members and volunteers to witness.



# NELSON RAILWAY SOCIETY INC

*Nelson Railway Society News, April 2023*

## SUMMER RUNNING

During the summer months the Railcar and Train ran on our shortened track between Wakefield Quay Station and back which was a ride of about 15 minutes. This shorter distance was necessary because the section of track on the western line to Grove Station was in need of checking and upgrading by our track crew of Basil and Eric H, led by the very experienced “boss” Eric K, or Erk as he is known. The work included the re laying of new sleepers. This work continued through the extremely hot summer days and it was a credit to the hardworking three who managed to get the track completed in time for the weekend Kite Festival later in January. The first train to use and test the finished track, was the Dsa just before Kite Day.

## TRAIN AND RAILCAR UPDATES

The Railcar has had some wider steps fitted by Peter B with some help from Eric H and these have made for easier access from the station platform. The Railcar has currently been out of action for over a month with a new radiator being fitted and work being done on the wheels. The Train has been running extra days to pick up the slack while the Railcar is not running. The Train has had new canvas sides fitted between carriages to make it safer for crossing from one carriage to another. Over the summer school holidays the train ran daily, much to the delight of the locals and tourists, so we were kept very busy. Our crews had to work harder than they probably would have wanted, as we are rather short on volunteers at the moment. So thanks to them.



Left: a work train heading out with new sleepers. Right: Wf403 was shifted into the workshop for some TLC.

# WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM INC

*Tramlines, March - April 2023*

## **Tram 235**

This has been the main focus of members' time and effort over this period. Fine weather has allowed good progress to be made.

Dismantling of this tram has continued and has now been completed. The interior of the tram was stripped out and as many items as possible were recovered for reuse.

The tram was moved to outside the tram barn and the body tipped on its side so that units, components and fittings could be removed from the underside of the chassis, cleaned up and labelled for storage. All the window glass has been removed and is stored.

Only limited amounts of the body have been retained due to the condition of the timber which was poor and borer-ridden and not suitable for use in the future tram restoration.

Roof items such as ventilators and pole gantries were recovered and are stored.

## **Ex-Melbourne Tram Motors from Bendigo**

As foreshadowed in our previous issue (page 5) the four ex-Melbourne GE247 tram motors have arrived at the Museum. They were delivered on Wednesday 1st February and are currently stowed on road 6 in the Workshop.

We used two ex-Melbourne GE247 motors in the restoration of Tram 17; these new arrivals will potentially be used in the restoration of Small Palace tram No.86 as well as for re-motoring any of our current trams should that become necessary.

## **Operating Trams**

Routine maintenance has continued including trolley carbon replacements on trams 159, 239 and 260, replacement of a worn trolley rope on Tram 159 together with work on its controllers. Tram 239 has required work on the magnetic brakes to equalise the braking effect from both ends. Work on improving windscreen wiper motors is under way.



Left: Partially dismantled tram 235 being towed out of the barn. Right: Henry Brittain (foreground) and Grant Johnson inspecting the four newly arrived GE247 motors after they had been unloaded into the tram workshop. Photos - Mike Flinn

# YARN

## *Rail Enthusiasts Society Inc/Glenbrook Vintage Railway (photos provided)*

### Ww644's Mainline Trip - A First in 53 years! - by Jarod Chevin

After a week of feverish activity at Pukeoware getting Ww 644 and the Tank wagon Uc 686 ready, the big day finally came!

Graham had lit the fire at 5am and by the time Wokky and myself had arrived 644 was just about ready to move off shed to be coaled. In order to use as little as possible from the bunker on the trip up to Glenbrook, 1/3 of a ton was loaded into the cab itself, piled against the closed door on the fireman's side. This makes for an interesting firing style! DBR 1254 provided the majority of the power to get the train up to Glenbrook, with Wokky working 644 only lightly in order to warm up her cylinders and motion. Upon arriving in the exchange siding we loaded up our passengers, filled up the side tanks on the locomotive with water out of the tower and put a syringe of oil in each axle box. Leaving slightly late, 644 pulled out of the siding at the start of an exciting adventure!

A bit of slipping on the climb up to Sommerville Road but Teapot and Tim soon her 644 in her stride as she negotiated the curves and short grades of the branch. Sweeping down into Paerata and onto the Main Trunk the train was soon at Pukekohe where a short stop was made to check bearing temperatures and that the motion was all intact, a thumbs up and a smile from Wokky told Mike Austin and myself in the cab of 1254 that all was good! From there we travelled down to Mercer where the first photo run was to be held, a rather ironic backdrop of the Mainline Steam 25NC's and the GMA Garrett aside, 644 charged past and looked gorgeous in the morning sunshine!

Here a slightly warm crankpin bearing was found, nothing that a little more oil didn't fix however!





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Moving on to Te Kauwhata, the train pulled into the loop to allow a KiwiRail wagon relocation train to pass, another opportunity was taken to check bearing temperatures. Up to this point I had been riding in the cab of DBR 1254, jumping out at the stops to assist Wokky with putting dabs of oil here and there, but now he and I swapped places and I climbed up into 644's cab. This was a special moment for me personally as I've dreamed about riding in the cab of one of our steam locomotives on the mainline for years and years, and this was my first opportunity. Wokky also handed me the remote control for the tank wagon, this remote allows the operator to start the generator on the wagon, this then powers the water pump, that is also controlled by the remote. This means that 644 can, in theory, travel non stop as far as the water in the Uc will take her, introducing a whole new level of flexibility for us on the mainline! The remote also has push button activation of the water level indicators and the lights that tell the operator if the generator and pump are active.

Leaving Te Kauwhata and getting up to speed really showed what our plucky little Ww is really capable of! 'High balling' (as the American's would say) down the Ohinewai straight next to the Waikato Expressway was pure magic, and for those who are wondering, riding in the cab at 55kph is a lot smoother than you might think! The ride in fact is very nice. Another quick stop at Huntly to jump out and have a feel of the bearings and check the motion, a fill up of the Tank wagon was planned here but we found that 644 had only used up just over half of the water in the bowl so we decided to carry on to Hamilton.

Starting out from Huntly I filled 644's side tanks in readiness for the last big leg, from the side tanks being half full it only takes a few minutes for the tank wagon to do it's thing.

Skirting round the Waikato River, and down the long straights into Hamilton where we pulled in and stopped at the East platform. Here the servicing of the locomotive would begin. Once the fire had been cleaned and the ashpan ready for emptying, 644 was uncoupled from the train and moved forward to sit over a specially prepared length of steel sheet, this would stop the sleepers from burning from the ash being dropped into them. This ash was then shoveled into the portable ash bin, something else that had been specially prepared and is now part of the steam servicing arsenal on the Tank wagon.





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Here the smoke box was emptied also and the locomotive reversed off the ash and back onto the train. Whilst the ash was damped down (using the pump and water on the tank wagon, and also done whilst the tank wagon was pumping water into itself from the hydrant) and shoveled away, coaling took place using the GVR truck 'Soph', she had several 1/4 ton bags loaded on her tray and the very useful Hiab loaded these into the bunker, at the same time the lubricator in the cab was also refilled. Now 644, the Tank wagon and 1254 shunted onto the ECMT, here 1254 was fired up and moved herself onto the other end of the train and 644 shunted the Tank wagon into the West berthing siding. Then it was onto the turntable in Te Rapa yard, seeing 644 winding her way through the DL's and electrics was a very surreal sight! One interesting thing to note is that 644 didn't need to be balanced on the turntable, the electric motor happily moved the 51 ton locomotive all the way round. Back at the West berthing siding with the tank car the servicing of the motion and pump began, with the lubricator having already been done it didn't take long to complete the rest of the oiling up. This servicing stop was the first time that we'd properly used the toolbox on the Tank wagon, this carries all the spares and consumables that 644 could possibly need, and fits nicely on the side of the wagon. Looking very much like the tool box on the side of 1250's tender! Now running slightly late, we took 644 back to the train and soon after departed Hamilton on the run back to Glenbrook. Throughout the whole day we had several cab riders in 644, these were people who had physically helped overhaul the locomotive. Seeing these volunteers and the smiles on their faces as we galloped along was very heart warming. One specific cab rider that we wanted was Neil Carey, we got him in the cab for the final stint between Mercer and Glenbrook. Neil fired 644 on her delivery trip north in 1970, it brought back a lot of memories for him whilst we climbed the Whangaratta Bank, where 53 years ago he recalls only dropping 30 pound of steam on the hill! After conquering the climb the next big challenge was the hill just after the junction at Paerata, unlike the Whangaratta Bank the climb up to Helvetia is 1 in 50, this was the part of the journey that we were slightly concerned about with 644 being only 20 tons under her limit for a grade this steep. To add a further complication, the fire was also getting pretty dirty and clinkered up by this stage, the coal which we've been getting for the past year seems to have a high ash and non burnable content which means it forms clinker over the firebars very easily. However the skill of the crew on the Northbound run (Tim and Cody) managed to get the very best of out of the fire and got a full head of steam by the time we departed Pukekohe station. The train charged at the grade and screamed round the curve of the triangle at Paerata, thundering over the main road and hitting the foot of the 1 in 50, here 644 started to slow and dug her heels into the rails. A few slips carefully controlled by Tim and quick flicks of coal on the fire by Cody and we crested the top of the hill by the overbridge in fine style. Neil seemed to very much enjoy the climb also!

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Rising and falling with the undulating track of the branch and before we knew it Glenbrook station came round the corner and our adventure was nearly at an end. Here we said good bye to all our passengers and brought the train down to Pukeoware for stabling of the carriages and servicing 644, here was a bit of time trying to get all the ash and clinker to fall out of the ash pan, needless to say the pricier was red hot by the end of it! By 8:30pm we had the old girl all settled down and were enjoying a good conversation about the success of the trip over the ash pile outside.

The run down to Hamilton was fantastic, other than being because 644, the Tank wagon and our team performed amazingly, it was because of what it represented, the very first time that we've run a revenue earning train with our own steam locomotive, our own carriages and support vehicles and our own crews, all under own very own mainline operating licence. Something that so many have dreamed of for so long. Now we just need to get 644 back to Greymouth! Operation 644 mark 2 perhaps...





# THE PLAINS RAILWAY

*8th April, Tony Cameron*



# GISBORNE CITY VINTAGE RAILWAY



Gisborne City Vintage Railway crossing the runway at Gisborne Airport after the plane landed. Photos: Uncredited



# PLEASANT POINT

## *Talking Point*

We recently received a Heritage plaque, from Heritage New Zealand which we have had mounted on the out side wall of the Pleasant Point railway station giving a short history of the former Fairlie branch line, the station and our museum.



Bryan and Marian Blanchard pictured with Brad Wilkinson of Timaru Signs



Easter Monday. Photos: Tony Cameron



# MAINLINE STEAM HERITAGE TRUST

## *Facebook*

A group of the regular Mainline Steam Auckland volunteers gathered at the Mercer site for a look at progress and a briefing from Stuart on what is happening. Good progress on the filling is being made and the contract for the mainline connection has been let. Drainage pipes have been added to an area of the open drain on the western boundary which will be filled to allow the mainline access. We are now approaching the "winter works" schedule which means our contractor, Rock and Rubble, cannot open any new ground but we can continue stockpiling fill for next summer. This will also act as overburden to compact the latest area filled.



Left: Catch up time. Right: The view from approximately halfway down the Western boundary.  
Photos: Mainline Steam Heritage Trust Facebook

# PAHIATUA RAILCAR SOCIETY INC.

## *Facebook*

After being marooned in Napier for just over one month with nothing to do Rm31 hitched a ride and slung a hook then got piggy backed out of Napier in the early hours of this morning arriving back home in Pahiatua at 8am today. Yesterday a big KiwiRail lifting exercise happened in Napier and an opportunity arose to which we did not turn down and with thanks to KiwiRail, Pollocks, Diack Cranes, McInstosh Cranes, BR Satherley and to all the boys that assisted in the railcar and to the PRS contingent thank you Selwyn Roberts and Mike Dutton for conveying up the lifting equipment.



Photos: Pahiatua Railcar Society Inc. Facebook



# CHRISTCHURCH TRAMWAY

## *Facebook*

We're saying goodbye to Tram 178 today!

The tram is heading off for 7-8 months while it undergoes an extensive refurbishment of its sides, driver cabs, floors and windows! We're looking forward to having the tram back in the city next summer.

### **Calling all tram drivers!**

We're looking for full-time and part-time tram drivers and conductors to join our Christchurch Tram team!

It's a great role: if you love chatting to people, are proud to share Ōtautahi Christchurch's stories with visitors from all over the world and think driving a tram would be a bit of fun, we want to hear from you.

Being part of our Christchurch Tram team is a unique role: no two days are the same, it's a great way to keep active (you'll get in plenty of steps from hopping on and off the tramcars), and you'll be part of the city's fabric driving our distinctive heritage trams – and getting plenty of photos taken! Contact our team at [info@christchurchattractions.nz](mailto:info@christchurchattractions.nz) for further information about the role and for a position application form – applicants need to have a valid driver's licence and be available for weekend work. We'll be interviewing in April with training starting in May for our next summer season.

Get in touch with us today!



Left: Tram 178. Photo: Christchurch Tramway Facebook Right: Tram 1888 taken from the Avon River by the Punting On The Avon team.



# KIWI RAIL

*Facebook, 20 April*

On Saturday, Ngāti Maniapoto, Crown, KiwiRail and partner representatives gathered at Te Māwhai, near Te Awamutu, to take part in a ceremonial event to honour an agreement established in 1885.

138 years ago to the day and the hour, the event re-enacted the sod turning by Crown, NZ Railways representatives and Ngāti Maniapoto at 2pm, 15 April 1885.

This turning of the first sod of soil marked the start of work to build the railway through the Maniapoto rohe (region) and eventually allowed the completion of the North Island Main Trunk line. As agreed at the time of construction, the rail line built through the Maniapoto rohe is now named 'Te Ara o Tūrongo' – the pathway of Tūrongo (a prominent Rangatira of the Tainui confederation). Guests travelled from Hamilton Station to Kihikihi via a 1915 steam train, courtesy of Glenbrook Vintage Railway.

At the event, the section of the railway line was returned to Ngāti Maniapoto and subsequently re-gifted to the Crown.

Thank you to our event partners: Ngāti Maniapoto, Te Arawhiti, MOTAT and Glenbrook Vintage Railway.

This significant event recognises our shared history and commitment to Iwi-Crown partnership. Titiro whakamuri, kōkiri whakamua - we look back and reflect, so that we can move forward together.



Left: 'Te Ara o Tūrongo'- The Pathway of Tūrongo. Right: Steam locomotive - 1915 WW644 from Glenbrook Vintage Railway. Photos: KiwiRail Facebook



Right: Group at the digging of the first sod for the Main Trunk Railway. They stand at the confiscation line at the southern bank of the Puniu River, 15 April 1885. Photograph taken by Daniel Manders Beere.

# THE WESTERN SPRINGS RAILWAY

## *Facebook*

Today we were delighted to host a group of Engineer Surveyors from SGS NZ Ltd., the purpose of which was to increase the number of surveyors qualified to certify heritage boilers in NZ. Across the country the number of qualified surveyors has dropped in recent years with the retirement of those people who have been familiar with working with older boilers like ours, and accordingly we are very excited to have been able to partner with SGS in undertaking this initiative. The surveyors being assessed today work right across the country, and as a result the work undertaken today has been an important step in ensuring NZ's steam heritage can continue to be enjoyed in the long-term. Our sincere thanks go out to SGS NZ Ltd. for their ongoing commitment to the heritage sector, and to the great bunch of guys who took the time to organise and participate in today's activities.

The work undertaken today has also directly allowed a number of our projects to progress:

- The Marshall portable engine is now back in service, having had its annual 'dry' and 'in steam' inspections today
- Steam Tram 100 is half way through the annual boiler certification process, having had its 'dry' inspection today. It is expected to be back in service during April.
- The Cochranette boiler recently donated to us by the Tramway Historical Society has been inspected and given approval to proceed to the next stage of its overhaul. It will now have further thickness testing undertaken in preparation for the fitting of the boiler tubes.
- A number of pieces of boiler plate which will be used on the Barclay locomotive and the Ruston roller were inspected and stamped, and in due course these will be formed to shape and installed in their respective boilers as time permits.

All in all it's been a very productive day and a great step forward- not only for MOTAT, but also for the heritage steam sector in NZ as a whole.

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### Boiler Update!

Since our visit from the group of SGS boiler surveyors a couple of weeks ago we've made great progress on some of our boiler projects. Both of our Cochranette boilers have been sandblasted and painted, and for the time being we've set our original one (No.13764) aside whilst we work on the ex. Christchurch one (No.18146). The thickness testing of this boiler's firebox was completed, with all the platework found to be in good condition. Tubes were then installed and today our boiler inspector completed an internal exam and hydrostatic test to 150psi. With this work now completed we will commence putting the pipework back on the boiler over the next few weeks, preparing it for it's first steaming in about 20 years. All going well we should have a fully operational boiler very soon!

At the same time as we performed the hydro test today we also put steam tram 100 through her annual steam test, meaning she's now fully certified to operate for the next 12 months.



# REEFTON HISTORIC GROUP

## *Facebook*

A lot of work has been going on since the Aug update.

The northern end vent has been built and installed. This is one complicated jigsaw puzzle.

A day was spent in the roof space clearing out 100 plus years of birds nests / straw. Not a nice job in the heat but it had to be done.

The new weatherboards that were installed on the northern wall and part of the Hattie Street side have had a coat of top coat painted on them. This has transformed the look of the station a lot.

Other work has been on the inside. Installing wiring, plumbing, plywood and gip on the walls of the 'Kitchen' room. The plywood is for upgrading the earthquake strengthening of the station.

In the next 8 days there will be a lot of work happening if the weather plays its part so call in and say hi



# WAIMEA PLAINS RAILWAY, MANDEVILLE AND ROGERS K92 LOCOMOTIVE

## *Facebook*

Rather a busy day at Mandeville today with a number of buses arriving throughout the day as part of Pounamu Tours. For such a large Tour Group, our volunteers were on hand making sure K92 was looking her best on a rare Friday running day. They were able to offer rides to an additional smaller Tour and our regular flow of visitors. We have attached a few general photos and welcome you to share any of yours to our page too.

It's a great opportunity to check out Stage 2 of the Gully Building - Railway Restoration Building. Remember it's running day income, donations/memberships along with retail sales that enable us to generate the dollars needed prior to being eligible for larger grant funding. Thank you all for your support.



# SILVER STREAM RAILWAY

## *Facebook*

We were saddened this week to learn of the passing of one of our long standing original members Brian Poulsen on Tuesday aged 81 after a long health battle. Brian was instrumental in getting our organisation to where it is today, both in his determination to gather our original collection, and to find it a permanent home. During his time as Preservation Officer he was responsible for the volumes of letters that were sent out to numerous organisations looking to build the railway literally from nothing, everything from the initial approaches to NZR about locomotives and rolling stock, through to the numerous letters sent out looking for both temporary and then a permanent home for the rapidly growing fleet of treasure. Despite many rejections and setbacks Brian and the members of the day successfully managed to turn the dream into reality in the late 60's and 70, leading to the many successful open days at Seaview with the equipment that had been gathered and establishment of the site we call home today. Our collection is so much more comprehensive thanks to Brian's "grab everything" policy, some items would have undoubtedly been lost had it not been for his determination to get things across the line with the powers that be. This same collection (now expanded) that still gives pleasure and helps tell the story of our nation's railway history will forever be Brian's legacy. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.





# STEAMRAIL WANGANUI INC.

## *Facebook*

Today SRW members took the opportunity of the extra day off work to do a full day working bee down at out 2 sites. Members relocated wheel sets from our No3 storage road to our No1 storage road at our site next to the turntable. This in turn will allow us more room for future track work and sleeper replacement on the No3 road. While this was happening another 2 members started putting the Ex East Town Workshops Steam Crane No120 Jib back together.

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Another full on Sunday working bee for the SRW team. This time putting their hands to a bit of track work.

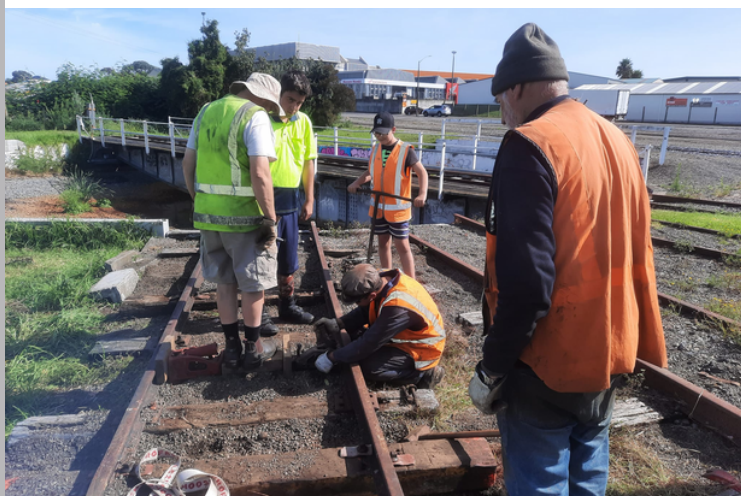
Sleeper replacement and re gauging of our 3rd road storage track at our site next to the turntable in the Wanganui yard.

We are getting this track ready for a wagon reshuffle, as we need to get the Uc tank wagon onto this track so a truck can access it, so it can be taken to its new home at Motat.

Over the last couple of years we have been in talks with Rail Heritage Trust about re homing some of their wagons. With the Uc being most likely the first one to move on. The Urc (bogie cement wagon), Vr (bogie insulated box wagon), Rb (now a bogie Ea class flat deck wagon), Bt (4 wheeled tank wagon) and Yb (4 wheeled ballast wagon) are also up for grabs if any groups are interested.

This has all come about because we need to look at down sizing our lease sites, due to proposed price rises by KiwiRail Properties. The club now needs to start concentrating on items that will eventually make us money, to keep us going instead of items that will only be static exhibits.

It will a shame to see these wagons move on as they were first offered to SRW by RHT because of their links to the Wanganui area. But its come to a time, to help our club to survive, we need to move these on. We would love them to go to a club who could restore them and even use them again.



Photos: Blair J

# OAMARU STEAM AND RAIL

*The Oamaru Steam and Rail Digest, April 2023*

- In March we carried 345 passengers. During the Jazz and Blues Festival, we had buskers performing on the train.
- In the workshop, we are refurbishing the new loader's electrical harness and bridge bolts are being cleaned. The DSC project is awaiting the return of a few large refurbished subassemblies.





# UPCOMING EXCURSIONS

## **Glenbrook Vintage Railway**

GVR have multiple trips available including the Steam Train Experience and First Class Experience, along with the Waiuku Steel 'N' Wheels Festival, the Te Kuiti Trekker and Mother's Day services.

For more details visit - [www.gvr.org.nz/events/whats-on](http://www.gvr.org.nz/events/whats-on)

## **Steam Incorporated**

Steam Incorporated have plenty of trips over the next few months, including the Heartland Flyer Steam Experience, the Grand Circle Rail Cruise, the Crafty Feilding Express and School Holiday Steam.

More information is available at- [www.steaminc.org.nz/book-train-trip](http://www.steaminc.org.nz/book-train-trip)

## **Dunedin Railways**

The Seaside and Inlander both operating over the Winter.

More information is available at- [www.dunedinrailways.co.nz/journeys](http://www.dunedinrailways.co.nz/journeys)

## **Gisborne City Vintage Railway**

There are plenty of trips coming up heading to Muriwai.

More details available at- <https://www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/>

## **Feilding and District Steam Rail Society Inc**

Around the Block 2 - To Wellington 2023 is operating on the 27th of May.

More information is available at- [https://events.steamrail.org.nz/?page\\_id=4](https://events.steamrail.org.nz/?page_id=4)

## **Kingston Flyer**

Operating Sundays to Fairlight and return departing Kingston at 10.30am and 2.00pm. Bookings go to [www.thekingstonflyer.nz](http://www.thekingstonflyer.nz) or email [info@thekingstonflyer.nz](mailto:info@thekingstonflyer.nz)

## **Pahiatua Railcar Society**

Catch the Railcar to The Park, or the Spiral Shuttle this Mothers Day, 14th May 2023.

More information - <https://www.railcars.co.nz/events>

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CONTENTS MAY BE REPUBLISHED WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.