

# JOURNAL

October 2025  
Issue CCXXXIX

*Show of force*  
*Heritage's biggest weekend*  
*in decades*

## Award winners

*Photos and more from*  
*the 2025 conference*

## Who's who

*FRONZ's new lineup*

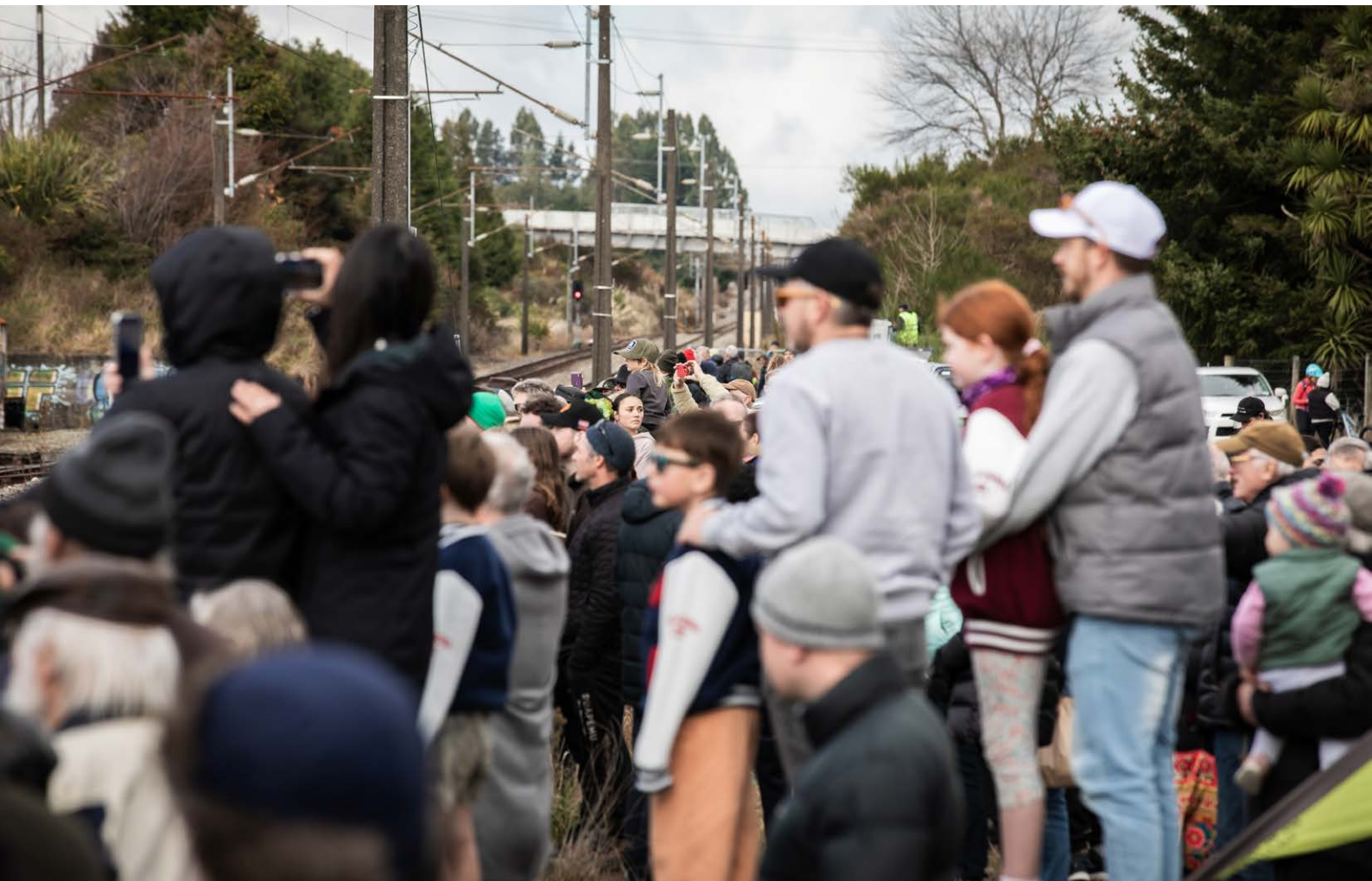


Photo: Bobby Boulton



*Above: On a fine Sunday morning at King's Birthday, trams wait for their next passengers at Ferrymead.  
Photo: Aaron Wong*

*Below: Passengers and sightseers watch JA 1271 and AB 608 shunt at Ohakune on 21 June ahead of the trip back to Palmerston North. Photo: Jeff Tollan*



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# President's Note

**Welcome to your October Journal, which follows a remarkable few months for the entire preservation movement.**

For those of you who missed conference, Grant Craig stepped down as FRONZ president after nearly 15 years at the helm, and a room full of people pointed their fingers at me to take his place. I'm honoured, a bit nervous, and thrilled to do my part to champion the work you're all doing.

A lot of you will know me from email: "Jeff Tollan, Secretary" – the rail version of "Michael Hill, Jeweller". It's a role I've had for the last eight years, and it's been enjoyable, despite the occasional moment of frustration or bewilderment.

I've got big shoes to fill as president and am lucky enough to have a world of support while I get my feet under the desk, especially from Grant, who has led the Firm through some tricky times, aided by his railway experience and a good old no-nonsense southern attitude.

But Grant's last hoorah as president (for now, at least), was organising an extravaganza showcasing the absolute best of the heritage sector.

June was one of the largest months



for preservation in a generation, stuffed to the brim with trips, excursions, and tours ... a heritage foie gras, if you will.

The strength of FRONZ is groups working together, and the 50th celebrations were no exception.

Astronomical hours were involved in both producing the Christchurch Conference and the subsequent mainline celebration in Palmerston North. We couldn't have done it without the many member groups who were working together to transport locomotives, plan rosters and sort logistics.

King's Birthday weekend packed in a visit to every group around Christchurch, extending north to Little River and south to the Plains Railway. In planning the weekend, all of these groups played a part and met several times ahead of the actual event. Their can-do attitudes and willingness to take charge spread the load and helped

## **In the works**

### **Conference 2026**

Work on this is already in the early stages, and we'll keep you posted on developments.

### **Website redesign**

Final tweaks are being made to a number of pages. We hope to see it live by late October.

### **Meetings**

The Executive meets in person in Dunedin on October 11 and 12. FRONZ and KiwiRail have their quarterly meeting on 31 October

to make Conference the memorable event it was. A special thanks must go to all the volunteers who gave up their long weekend to support it, and the groups themselves for their enthusiasm, not to mention every one of you who attended.

The same must be said for those involved in crewing, cleaning, and planning the mainline celebration in Palmerston North in late June. This was the largest mainline event in a decade, and required a tremendous amount of work to pull off, with people working in their own time into the small hours to make it happen.

TrackSafe, KiwiRail and NZTA also deserve recognition for their support of this massive undertaking, and KiwiRail even produced a special bulletin to commemorate the mainline extravaganza.

To everyone and anyone who had a role to play in these events, I want to pass on my heartfelt thanks to you for helping us to put on one of the largest and most impressive displays in a very long time.

### **Looking to the future**

My sights are now on what the future of FRONZ looks like, and this part is where I ask for your help. I've made no secret of the fact I think FRONZ needs to work more closely with groups of all shapes and sizes, nor that there's room for groups to work more collaboratively.

Next weekend, the FRONZ executive meets in Dunedin, we'll be looking at how FRONZ functions, how we can be more engaged, and what we can do to encourage greater collaboration between members.

We can't do this in a vacuum, though. I want to

hear from you, our members and supporters, about what you think we should be doing, or what we need to do better. Tell us where our blind spots are, and a solution to fix it.

Think about:

- Do we offer the support you need? If not, what can we do differently?
- Do you know anyone on the executive, or are we strangers?
- When you have a problem, is FRONZ among the solutions you think of?

You're paying the subs, so this is your chance, outside conference, to have a say on how FRONZ operates. If you have an idea, please contact me at [president@fronz.org.nz](mailto:president@fronz.org.nz). Don't assume someone else will say what you're thinking.

### **Finally...**

A few of you have noted the delay in this edition and your patience is appreciated while we've juggled production and sourcing content, alongside our day jobs and other priorities (everything's urgent, eh?). You can assist us with production by sharing your updates, content and photos to [journal@fronz.org.nz](mailto:journal@fronz.org.nz).

You're all doing amazing work, from restorations, fundraising, planning events and celebrating milestones. Let us know about it.

And this weekend, 4 and 5 October, The Helensville Railway Station Trust celebrates the sesquicentennial (150 years) of the railway to Helensville. We wish the Trust all the best for the anniversary weekend. [You can learn more about what's happening here.](#)

Thank you all for your support. Now sit back, relax, and enjoy your Journal.

JEFF TOLLAN  
President

## *Sign up for the FRONZ mailing list*

Email [secretary@fronz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@fronz.org.nz) to get the Journal and other FRONZ announcements.



*Ian Welch with Jb1236 at Palmerston North during the test run.  
Photos: MLSHT*

# Return to the mainline

– Grant Craig

On 28 June, Mainline Steam Heritage Trust conducted a crew training and test run consisting of Jb1236, Uc323, Dj1229, Fm3010, Ao123, Asol36, Ao48, Ao31, Ao215 from Plimmerton to Palmerston North and back.

The locomotives, including the recently restored Jb 1236, returned to the mainline after a six-year hiatus. The trip involved stops for crew training and to check bearing temperatures at various locations which included Paekakariki and Waikane.

While not a public excursion, invited guests were in attendance – not just FRONZ but NZTA, KiwiRail and Steam Inc to name a few. The weather wasn't perfect but it held off raining for most of the day and there was a good turnout to watch

the train pass at locations along the line and people following in cars, admiring the Jb and its train.

Arrival at Palmerston North was a bit late and like most railway stations throughout New Zealand, it wasn't the warmest place on a cold day, but a good crowd was waiting to meet the train.

While the locos disappeared to the turntable to be turned the passengers had lunch and I had a good catch-up with a lot of people I hadn't seen for a while, including one from Invercargill who was there on holiday.

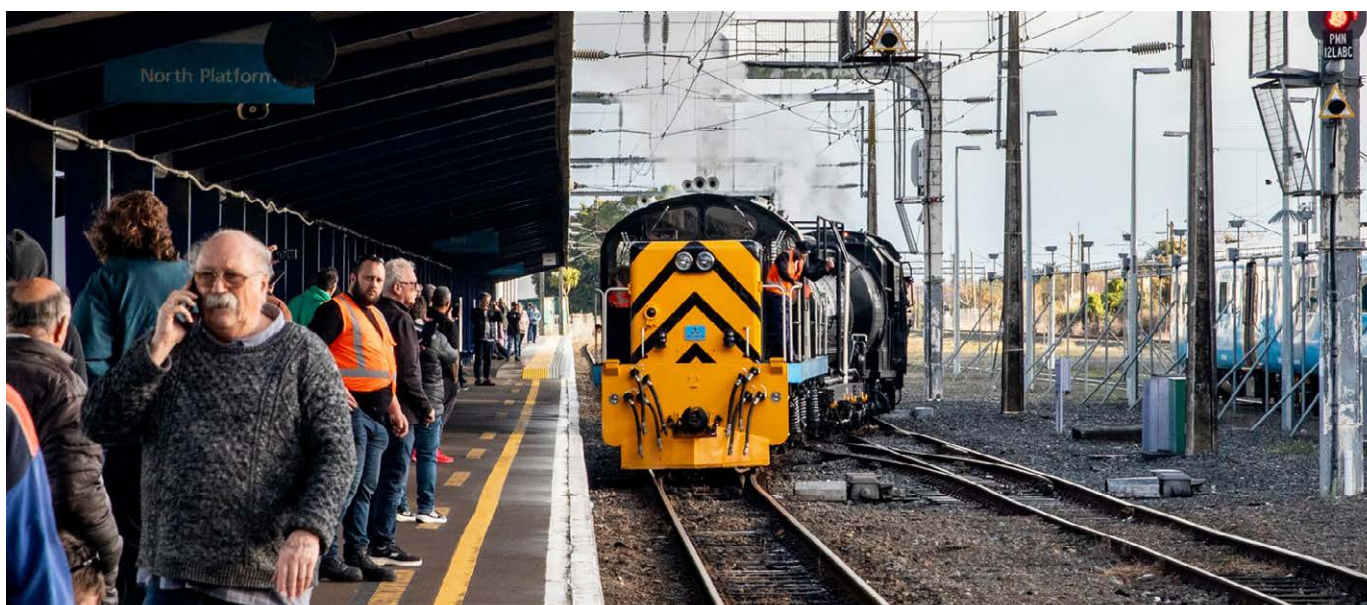
While the train was late departing Palmerston North due to servicing, the homeward journey was a faster run with the testing of bearings and other parts completed.



The climb from Paekakariki to Pukerua Bay was going to be the test for locomotive and crew and good progress was made until a short had to be stop after passing the last tunnel before Muri. Thankfully, it wasn't long until the trip commenced for the rest of the climb to Pukerua Bay and the downhill descent to our destination at Plimmerton.

It's good to see Mainline Steam back on the mainline and after passing this successful test run, we will now see more Mainline Steam trains operating on the national rail system.

Congratulations to everyone involved in making this happen.



# Regulator update

A Rail Safety Case Guideline is being developed by NZTA in response to numerous requests from the rail industry for comprehensive guidance about developing a rail safety case.

The primary objective is to assist rail participants who require a licence to develop a safety case. Once finalised, the guideline will:

- Provide detailed guidance to rail participants about their duties and related obligations under the Act
- Reflect good practice and assist rail participants in taking practical steps to meet their responsibilities

when developing a safety case

- Define the rail safety regulator's expectations, which are used when a rail participant's safety case is assessed
- Facilitate a high level of safety awareness and a commitment to safety throughout all levels of the licenced rail participant.

We will share the guideline with our railway licence holders and provide an opportunity to give feedback. More information on this will be coming out shortly. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact your licence manager.

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## 50 years of COTMA



It's not just FRONZ that's celebrating 50 years – our sister organisation, the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia (COTMA), is having its 50th party this month.

The event is being held in Brisbane from 10 – 13 October and features visits to the Ipswich Workshops Rail Museum, Queensland Rail Heritage fleet maintenance workshops, and a train to Ferny Grove. There will also be talks on working with regulators, social media promotion, medical standards and stats (who doesn't love numbers!).

We were lucky enough to have COTMA Australia rep Peter Hyde (pictured left) at this year's Christchurch Conference to talk about a number of Australian tramways, and their anniversary plans. We want to thank Peter for making the trip across the ditch to visit us and share his thoughts.

# Station celebrate 150 years



*Bryan Blanchard, Pleasant Point's longest-serving and founding member, ahead of the cake-cutting at the railway station's 150th celebration. Photo: Donald Goodman.*

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Pleasant Point Railway Station, and on 21 September, hundreds of people came to celebrate.

AB699 and RM4 were shuttling passengers, pausing while a station-shaped cake was cut by founding member Bryan Blanchard. Rangitata MP James Meager, Mayor Nigel Bowen and Deputy Mayor Scott Shannon were among the visitors on the day.

The station was built in 1875, but was located several hundred metres east, on the other side of the railway line from where it sits now.

It was moved to its present site in 1882 and extended so it could function as a post office and telegraph exchange, while the roof was raised in 1900. It wasn't until February 1970, after the Fairlie branch closed, that another significant alteration



*Passengers await the next night train. Photo: Claire Friel*



was made – the installation of a canopy to protect AB699, which sat dormant on a small piece of track in front of the station.

The uprights for the canopy are made of rail pulled up from the branch line, and the shape was modelled on plans from New Zealand Railway archives. The late Russell Paul mentioned passengers boarding the Fairlie Flyer at Pleasant Point regularly complained the station needed a canopy – to paraphrase Russell: “It’s funny that it took the line closing for that to happen...”

The Fairlie branch line was closed to passenger traffic on 2 November 1953, when many smaller station buildings were removed. In its final years, goods trains operated on a thrice-weekly schedule – Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays – arriving at Washdyke Junction around 10am and returning there from Fairlie about 4pm.

Congratulations to everyone involved!



*Rangitata MP James Meager, Deputy Mayor Scott Shannon and Mayor Nigel Bowen pose by 699.*

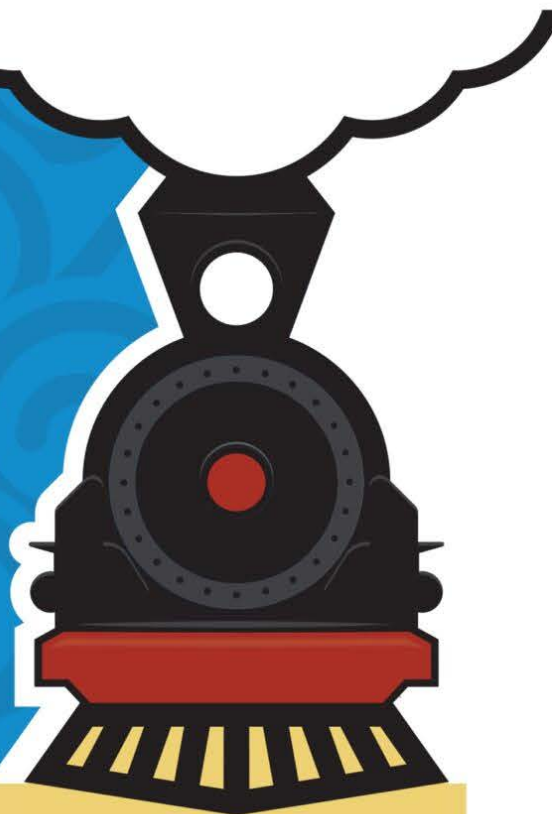
*Photo: Tony Cameron*



# Te Awaroa Helensville Heritage Festival

**Saturday & Sunday**  
**4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> October**  
**10am – 4pm**

**Get your tickets today**  
**\$15 Adults**  
**\$10 Seniors and Children**  
**\$25 Family**



## Our events are:

- Train displays at Helensville Railway station, including Sammy the Steam Train
- View historic houses
- Grand Hotel restaurant open for tea and scones
- RSA open to showcase military memorabilia
- Helensville Mechanical hosting a vintage car show in carpark
- Helensville War Memorial Hall vintage market
- Food trucks
- Heritage mural opening
- Twilight Cemetery Tour
- Te Awaroa Museum hosting a large Barbie doll display, a heritage horse racing display, heritage sports exhibits and the past of Parakai/ Kaipatiki.
- Shuttle bus available
- ...and so much more.

## SPONSORS



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Top image: A platform heaving with people awaits the cavalcade at Palmerston North. Below: Ab 608 leads Ja 1271 at the Turangarere horse shoe on the way to Ohakune on Saturday 21 June.

Photos: Marty Melville.

# CONFERENCE



# 2025

# CONFERENCE 2025 DEBRIEF



*Top left: Henry Brittain KSM speaks. Bottom left: Douglas Medlycott gives an overview of the new DM locos. Photos: Jeff Tollan*

This year's conference was a record-setter, with more than 120 attendees at the annual awards dinner, held at the Rydges Hotel in Christchurch.

During the weekend, delegates visited Little River, the Plains Railway in Ashburton, McLeans Island, the Canterbury Railway Society and Tramway Historical Society at Ferrymead, and Weka Pass. Workshop tours went hand-in-hand with rides on trains, trams, jiggers, and narrow-gauge railways. We want to say a big thank you to the groups that hosted us, and who went out of their way to make this a memorable weekend and a very fitting 50th celebration.

We must also thank the sponsors who have generously funded prizes for the evening: NZTA Waka Kotahi; Rail Heritage Trust; Dunedin Railways; KiwiRail; MOTAT Society; Glenbrook Vintage Railway; and Pounamu Tourism Group.

Speakers included KiwiRail's David Gordon and Douglas Medlycott (who spoke about the new DMs), TrackSafe's Megan Drayton, NZTA, Peter Hyde, who flew from Australia to represent COTMA, and Chris Le Marshall, who also flew from Australia to represent WATTRAIN (the World Alliance of Tourist Trams and Trains).



*Top: COTMA Australia rep Peter Hyde talks to delegates about tramways in Australia and the troubles they are facing.*

*Bottom: Christchurch councillor Aaron Keown opens conference.*

*Photos: Jeff Tollan*



## HAULING IRON

David Oakley took these shots of the Plains' A 64 and Pleasant Point's D 16 loaded up and ready for transport to Canterbury Railway Society ahead of FRONZ's 50th.



*Friday of King's Birthday was biting cold. With jackets, scarves and beanies at the ready, delegates visited Little River before heading south to the Plains Railway, where Ja 1260 was in steam for FRONZ delegates.*

*Photos: Jeff Tollan*





## CONFERENCE CHAT

*With a reduced programme, Saturday was packed with speakers. Pictured clockwise from top left, Chris le Marshall from WATTRAIN, David Gordon from KiwiRail, Josh Garrett from Western Springs Tramway and Bradley Hill from Dunedin Railways (and new FRONZ Secretary).*

*Photos: Jeff Tollan*

# Executive changes

Grant Craig has stood down as president after nearly 15 years in the role. He is replaced by Jeff Tollan, who has served as secretary for eight years.

Bradley Hill of Dunedin Railways takes on the role of Secretary, while Bronwyn Cowles of Waimea Plains takes over as Treasurer from Bruce Shalders, who

spent six years in the job.

Both Grant and Bruce were elected to the executive, and Courtney Kilner was re-elected – all unopposed.

Clark Simmonds remains as director of RAIL (Rail Assessments & Inspections Limited).

## **Your FRONZ Executive:**

### **Committee:**

- President - Jeff Tollan
- Treasurer - Bronwyn Cowles
- Secretary - Bradley Hill
- Grant Craig
- Bruce Shalders
- Courtney Kilner

### **RAIL:**

- Director - Clark Simmonds

### **Contact:**

- [president@fronz.org.nz](mailto:president@fronz.org.nz)
- [secretary@fronz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@fronz.org.nz)
- [journal@fronz.org.nz](mailto:journal@fronz.org.nz)

# Conference downloads

## AGM:

- [2025 AGM agenda](#)
- [AGM attendees](#)
- [President's Annual Report](#)
- [Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting](#)
  - [2025 Treasurer's report](#)
- [Audited FRONZ accounts \(YE 31 March 2025\)](#)
  - [2025 RAIL report](#)
- [Audited RAIL accounts \(YE 31 March 2025\)](#)
  - [Constitution tabled to AGM](#)
  - [2025 HTC report to AGM](#)
- [2025 Non-mainline operators & museums convenor report](#)

## Awards night:

- [Fifty years of FRONZ](#)
- [Awards slides \(PDF\)](#)

## Conference speakers:

- [NZTA presentation](#)
- [MOTAT Tramway presentation](#)
- [David Gordon, KiwiRail, presentation](#)



# FRONZ AWARDS

2025 marked the largest awards night ever for FRONZ. More than 120 attendees gathered at the Rydges Hotel, where Grant Craig and Clark Simmonds opened the awards with a look back at the past 50 years of FRONZ and what we've achieved together.

Thank you to everyone who came, and the generous sponsors who helped us recognise our members' great achievements.



# CONGRATULATIONS

Pictured above are the award winners from the night, representing an army of volunteers and workers who have dedicated hours to restoration, safety, volunteering and more.

We encourage every group to think about nominating their volunteers, restorations and projects ahead of next year's award ceremony.









Attendees of the first FRONZ conference: Dave Hinman, Michael Ross, Neil Carey, Ian Welch, Colin Jenner and Paul Markholm.

# AWARD WINNERS

## ***PAUL HEIGHTON MEMORIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE***

Awarded to Peter Jenkinson from Canterbury Railway Society

For his leadership role over many years. Peter's contributions have always been centred on operational safety and excellence of delivery while ensuring preservation of the true heritage values of the infrastructure and rolling stock.



## ***PAUL DILLICAR MEMORIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE***

Awarded to Harry Andrew from Oamaru Steam and Railway Society.

For his innovative leadership of the Oamaru Steam & Railway Society.

## ***THE DUNEDIN RAILWAYS MOTIVE POWER AWARD***

Awarded to Glenbrook Vintage Railway for the sterling restoration of DC 4818. Neil Carey (Railway Enthusiasts Society) was on hand to accept the award with Tim Kerwin. Neil was one of the delegates at the first FRONZ conference and it was an honour to have him join us.



***THE DUNEDIN RAILWAYS MOTIVE POWER  
AWARD***

***HIGHLY COMMENDED***

Awarded to Pahiatua Railcar Society for their restoration of RM31.



***THE POUNAMU TOURISM GROUP  
CARRIAGE/GUARDS VAN  
RESTORATION AWARD***

Awarded to Lumsden Heritage Trust for the restoration of C100.

C100 had sat behind a house in Winton since 1942, before the Trust recovered it and began a massive restoration. After putting it on a frame made from two Jc wagon underframes and axles, restoration began. The project started in June 2021 and was finally completed in March 2025.

***THE POUNAMU TOURISM GROUP CARRIAGE/  
GUARDS VAN RESTORATION AWARD***

***HIGHLY COMMENDED***

Awarded to Steam Incorporated for the restoration of A1962.



### ***THE MOTAT SOCIETY TRAMWAY RESTORATION AWARD***

Awarded to the Tramway Historical Society for the restoration of their 1895 cage double deck trailer, No.74.



### ***THE GLENBROOK VINTAGE RAILWAY YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD***

Awarded to Denis Mansell of Dunedin Railways.

Denis started in railways at the age of 18, and joined Dunedin Railways in 2022. “His banter and light hearted nature make even the hardest days more enjoyable, boosting team morale and fostering a positive work environment.”

### ***THE FRONZ VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD***

Awarded to George ‘Pirate’ Handy of Glenbrook Vintage Railway.

Pirate’s dedication and work ethic exemplify what it means to be a volunteer. Always willing to help, Pirate rolls up his sleeves and does the jobs that are essential and often overlooked – he’s a valuable and much-respected member of the GVR team.



***THE MOTAT SOCIETY STEAM  
LOCOMOTIVE RESTORATION AWARD***

Awarded to the Bush Tramway Club for their restoration of Climax 1650.

Built in 1924, 1650 is a rare geared steam locomotive, that spent decades in static storage after retiring from the Ongarue bush tramway in 1960. The restoration required a huge amount of work, including from professionals who had the equipment to take on the job. Air brakes have been added, but original pipework was preserved or precisely replicated.



***THE KIWIRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE  
IMPROVEMENT AWARD***

Awarded to Canterbury Railway Society for the extension of their signalling system.

This was an impressive undertaking to extend the signalled area, removing the dark territory and increasing capacity on the line. It includes improved safety features, such as the approach time on a level crossing increasing.

***THE KIWIRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE  
IMPROVEMENT AWARD***

***HIGHLY COMMENDED***

Awarded to Pahiatua Railcar Society for the installation of a large concrete floor to improve shed safety.



### ***THE NZTA WAKA KOTAHI TOURISM & HERITAGE RAIL SAFETY AWARD***

Awarded to the Canterbury Railway Society for demonstrating a commitment to continual improvements in safety with their design and installation of platform gates and gangways on carriage D26.



### ***THE RAIL HERITAGE TRUST RESTORATION AWARD***

Awarded for the stunning restoration of the Waitahuna Railway Station.

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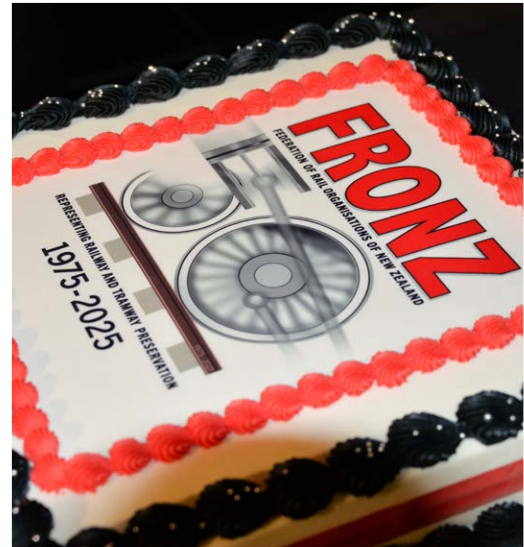
## THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR AWARDS





Above: Ian Welch and Margaret Simmonds prepare to cut the cake.  
Below: DLA Turner gives an entertaining speech at the awards.

Photos: Lindsay Benbrook, Jeff Tollan





*To celebrate FRONZ's 50th anniversary, and recognise the change that's happened over the decades, KiwiRail's David Gordon presented FRONZ with a framed photo of the sculpture that commemorates the rebuild following the Kaikoura earthquake.*

*The text reads:*

*THIS SCULPTURE REMINDS US THAT CHANGE IS VERY MUCH A CONSTANT. THE TWISTED RAIL COMMUNICATES THE RAW POWER OF MOTHER NATURE, AND MAY STAND AS A CONSTANT REMINDER OF HOW RESILIENT WE ALL ARE AS IT REACHES UPWARD.*

*Photo: Aaron Wong*

SUNDAY



# TRIP BACK IN TIME

*On the Sunday of King's Birthday, delegates visited Canterbury Railway Society, the Tramway Historical Society, and Steam Scene at McLeans Island.*

*Ashburton's A 64 and Pleasant Point's D 16 joined CRS's D 140 pulling trains at Ferrymead for FRONZ delegates and the public through the weekend, with crews from each society joining in to help.*

*Photo: David Oakley*



Some of the incredible team that crewed for the celebration at Ferrymead  
Photo: Glen Anthony



*Photos: Aaron Wong*





*A stunning lineup late on Sunday at Ferrymead. Photo: David Oakley*



*A 64 passes D 16 at Ferrymead. Photo: Glen Anthony*



Photos: Aaron Wong



*Photos: David Oakley*





*It's always nice to have shots of the people who make big events possible - thanks to Glen Anthony for capturing these shots of the volunteers at Ferrymead.*





*A crowd enjoys the ride in air conditioned wagons behind the triple header of D 140, A 64 and D 16. Photo: Glen Anthony. Below, Nic Doncaster of the Motorcar Consortium in Australia takes his wife, and Blenheim Riverside Railway's John Orchard, for a spin at Steam Scene in McLeans Island. Photo: Jeff Tollan*





*A special treat was getting an all-body workout on one of Steam Scene's hand jiggers, after admiring the unique turnout to the shed.*





## MONDAY

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*Di 1102 on a photo run at Frog Rock, Weka Pass. This followed a trip to the local hotel for lunch and refreshing refreshments.*

*Photo: Jeff Tollan*



*FRONZ delegates pose at Waikari on a sunny day in North Canterbury. Photo: Janet Weir. Accompanying shots: Jeff Tollan*



## WEKA PASS

*From top left: Bruce Shalders and DLA Turner, Tommy Secker and Bradley Hill, Neville Tobin and Paul Markholm, Craig Baikie, along with photo lines and platform banter.*

*Photos: Jeff Tollan*



# Mainline Power

*Over Matariki weekend, from 20-22 June, the largest mainline celebration in a decade took place in Palmerston North.*

*Planning was led by Steam Incorporated and Glenbrook Vintage Railway, and involved a weekend packed with excursions, shuttles, displays, cab rides and sights that are rarely seen on the mainline.*

*The event launched at Palmerston North Railway Station on Friday morning, with a grand cavalcade watched by hundreds, before the first of many trips - shuttles to Feilding.*

*One of the highest-profile events was the Main Trunk Steam Spectacular, which was followed by a massive number of photographers and members of the public, with dozens of vehicles parked up at prime spots to witness*

*the sight of a double-header hauled by JAI271 and AB608.*

*The sheer number of passengers and onlookers proves Kiwis have an insatiable appetite for heritage.*

*The hundreds (if not thousands) of hours involved in the planning paid off and we want to thank those who led the charge to make this event happen. Hopefully it has helped a whole new generation fall in love with what we do.*

*Special thanks must also be made to KiwiRail, NZTA, and TrackSafe for their work in supporting the weekend.*

*Words can't do the event justice, but these photos - starting with Marty Melville's cracking shot of the double-header on the Mangaweka Viaduct - come pretty close. Enjoy.*



*Before the mainline event, there was the small issue of getting locomotives to Palmerston North. For GVR's Ww 644, that meant a herculean trip down the North Island. The train is pictured at Taumarunui with DBR1254 and Steam Inc's Da 1410, and at Waiouru where the crew posed for a photo.*

*Photos: Bobby Boulton*





*"The little engine that could" -  
Ww 644 puts on an impressive  
display over the 414 metre-  
long Hāpuawhenua Viaduct  
as it heads south to Palmers-  
ton North to take part in the  
celebration.*

*Photo: Xavier Koenigsberger*



Jack Still

*On Friday 20 June, the mainline celebrations kicked off under the watchful eye of hundreds of people. Despite the crowds having to run for cover between showers, the sun still managed to break through.*

*Jack Still took these images of the locos and Pahiatua's railcar lining up for the cavalcade.*



Still



*The Main Trunk Steam Spectacular on Saturday 21 June. Pictured heading north through Mangaweka, and storming south from Ohakune towards Tangiwai.*

*Photos: Jeff Tollan*





*Ja 1271 and Ab 608 after turning at Ohakune. Photo: Jeff Tollan. Below, 1271 and 608 punch holes in the sky on the way back to Palmerston North. Photo: Jack Still*





The impressive sight of a quadruple-header on 22 June, made up of DC 4818, DBR 1254, DA 1410 and DA 1431. The train travelled up to the King Country, stopping at Taumarunui before returning to Palmerston North.

Photos: Jack Still





# A FINAL THANK YOU

On behalf of FRONZ, I want to all the workers, organisations and volunteers involved in making this grand spectacular happen! Without people like you, none of this would be possible.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the talented photographers around New Zealand who shared their stunning photos and gave permission for them to be reproduced in this edition of Journal.

– Jeff Tollan, FRONZ President

**It's calendar time again, and the Railway Enthusiasts Society 2026 calendar is available for purchase.**

These can be sold in shops, and offered at a discount for members.

**Wall/desk calendar:**

Wholesale – \$7.50+GST  
RRP – \$16.99

**Shipping:**

10+ Calendars – Free Shipping  
1 – 9 Calendars – \$12

Orders of Desk and Wall calendar will be combined and will ship within the week.



All calendars are sold on Sale or Return basis with final wash up being completed in late January 2026.

**Order** by emailing [office@res.org.nz](mailto:office@res.org.nz) with your shop name, quantity of wall/desk calendars, delivery address and accounts email.

## WANT TO BUY, SELL OR EXCHANGE? WE'VE GOT YOU

FRONZ has a Facebook group called "FRONZ Reclaim Online", where you can buy, sell or swap items, or get help tracking down parts.

Simply search for the group on Facebook, or use the QR code on the right.

Once you're accepted to the group you can get posting.



# ‘It’s terrific to remind the world it all started here’



*The Locomotion No 1 passing through the village of Heighington in County Durham on its first official journey in 200 years*

**- BBC, North East, 27 September 2025**

Thousands gathered to see a replica steam engine embark on a three-day journey to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). Why all the fuss?

When it came to its big departure, the Locomotion No 1 was surprisingly quiet.

Its gentle huffing was easily drowned out by the flag-waving crowd giving three cheers - and an extra one for luck - followed by thunderous applause at Locomotion rail museum in Shildon, County Durham.



*Chris Cubitt will drive the Locomotion No 1 replica.*

It actually left 19 minutes later than scheduled, but there weren't the usual grumbles you hear when a train is delayed.

As the Darlington-bound engine, three coal wagons and passenger carriage trundled away at a maxi-



imum speed of 15mph, many stayed to watch its progress on the giant screen in the museum's plaza.

People had travelled from across the world to see the setting off of the replica engine, which was built in 1975 for the 150th anniversary of the railway and has been lovingly restored to allow it to take part today

It is due to arrive in Stockton on Sunday with viewing opportunities aplenty along the route.

So, why make the effort to come and see it?

"Because it's free", Bryan Johnston says with a laugh, adding, perhaps unnecessarily: "I am from Yorkshire you know."

He has come from Richmond with his wife Wendy and sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Dick Stokoe, who have travelled from Nunthorpe, near Middlesbrough.

"It's absolutely terrific for the North East to remind the rest of the world this is where it all started," Bryan says.

All four are struck by the atmosphere, the jovial mood of the crowd bolstered by the striking up of the brass bands.

"This is what it might have been like 200 years ago," Margaret says, alluding to the thousands who came to see the railway open on 27 September 1825, and the maiden voyage of George Stephenson's Locomotion No 1.

"Seeing that first train go must have been gob-smacking," she says.

Bryan agrees, adding: "It was like the space shuttle launch of its day."

While the train today departed from the museum, the actual Locomotion No 1 set off on its maiden voyage from outside the Mason Arms,



*The Locomotion No 1 replica departed Shildon in County Durham.*

a 10-minute walk to the west.

A plaque unveiling was held there to celebrate the historic occasion and to also mark the creation by Durham County Council of a new walking route following the first section of the original railway.

Matthew Edward Pease, the four times great-grandson of the S&DR's creator Edward Pease and president of the Friends of the S&DR, was there to see the unveiling.

"Edward Pease was the driving force behind the creation of the railway," he says of his ancestor, adding: "He just had the idea this was something that could work and do a lot of good for people."

"But it was thanks to the ingenuity, energy and sheer hard work of the people of the North East that his vision became reality."

The Locomotion No 1 left the rail museum at 12:04 BST, having had an original departure time of 11:45.

While no-one seemed to mind too much, the delay did have consequences.

"Yes I recognise the irony," the ticket collector sighs as Northern's 13:26 Shildon to Bishop Auckland pulls away almost half an hour late, having had to wait down the line at Darlington to let the Locomotion No 1 pass.

"It was all worth it," a fellow passenger who has come from Norfolk says, while another chuckles: "Being delayed by the thing we came to see, perfect."

"You are all a part of history," the train manager announces over the speakers, after apologising for the delay.

"After all, how many people can say they have been delayed by a 200-year-old train?"