



Goldfields Railway

Newsletter

December 2023

Welcome back to our Christmas edition of the Goldfields Railway newsletter. There has been a lot happening so without further ado we have a lot for you to read over your Christmas break!

Treasurer's Report to AGM 28 Oct 2023

This past year has been another very challenging year.

Our Income from Ticket sales increased by 16% overall due to the increase in passenger numbers by a similar amount (29,200 to 34,700)

We did however make a small loss for the year of \$11,147. This was due to the repayment of a \$50K grant we received from the Lion Foundation for the Train shed roof replacement that was delayed meaning we needed to return the money. We have reapplied and some money will again be granted to us but it is unlikely to be \$50K.

Lotteries Heritage who in the past have been a major source of grant money for track maintenance have advised that due to an overall shortage of funds that they will not be funding track maintenance work. This is a blow and will require careful and creative management by your committee.

The Shunters Cottage has worked well with good bookings and returns

The Camping ground has returned \$14,984 this year and will continue to increase. We will be providing a metalled driveway once the ground dries out

We paid full lease charges this year to the Dept of Conservation who are our Landlords and I am presently waiting to hear what is proposed for the New year.

Dean McQuoid was able to source a large quantity of concrete sleepers at no charge. While we did pay to sort them and transport them to Waihi, Dean has donated many hours putting them on site ready for insertion into our line.

Also Richard Humfrey has donated the time he spent to carry out our Track Inspection. So a big THANK YOU to Dean and Richard.

Sue Brandt has been looking after our office administration and Station Master duties with support from Laura Jane. Thank you both for the good work you are doing.

Diane Dawson at the Waikino Station Café has worked well with Goldfields and provided an excellent service to our visitors.

We are looking forward to a good summer season and expect increased visitor numbers and so will be working hard to achieve this.

The Paddocks surrounding our Railway are now being mowed regularly by me and grazed by others to keep them tidy. We still have a quantity of bamboo on the boundary of the Cattle Yards property and it is planned to remove the majority of this in the summer.

Our Audit unfortunately could not be completed by our AGM but the accounts presented will be 99% correct. Any changes will relate to technical reporting matters.

With regards to our annual accounts, the detail is on pages 23 onwards (Notes to the accounts) as under the Incorporated Societies. The format of annual reporting accounts changed to condense the initial figures for Govt reporting.

I will not go through these in detail but I am happy to answer any questions at a later date.

Many thanks to all those who contribute to keep Goldfields Railway a viable operation

Chris Hale

Treasurer

REPORT ON THE AFFAIRS OF GOLDFIELDS RAILWAY FOR THE 2022/2023 YEAR

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to this Annual General Meeting for the 2022-2023 year. We are trying a different time and venue this year, in an attempt to get more of our 71 financial members attending.

As with the sudden passing of Goldfields Railway's Chairperson, Graeme Martin earlier this week, if we all could observe a moments silence in respect of a number of members who have passed away this year, which included Foundation and Life Members, together with other members, past and present.

Thank you.

Before Graeme sadly passed away, he did start to put together a report of Goldfields Railway activities for the year, for the A.G.M., which I will relay as follows.

Graeme took over the Chairperson's role after the first meeting of the new meeting cycle, and remarked that although he hadn't been in the role for quite a year, it had been a trying time. Some of the achievements for the year that he mentioned are as follows:

- Donation of appropriate personal safety gear for members of the R & M Team, plus other safety gear for Operational Staff.
- A revamping of the Train (Carriage) Shed, which includes new roofing, and plans to extend the facility, with an addition of toilets, a larger workshop area to undertake restorations and the like, which Graeme wanted to see done.
- Working to make a start on the restoration of the Goods Shed.
- Working to repair the roofing structure of the fertiliser shed to make it safe for everyone.
- On the administration side, the Safety Case and System had been updated, which is the document on how Goldfields Railways operates.

- Graeme was also working on the revamping Goldfields Railway's Constitution to bring it in line with the New Incorporated Societies Act.
- Rail Infrastructure material obtained for future maintenance of the track
- Robin Street property tidying up and leases formalized
- Larger locomotives up and going
- Yard tidying up and organisational plan going forward
- Loco 7 back in operation
- Slips and trees cleared off the line with YD wagons
- Concrete sleepers laid out alongside track with EST flat wagons

So, I will cover in a little more depth on what has happened at Goldfields Railway over the past 12 months.

Operational Aspects of Goldfields Railway

Over the past 12 months, Goldfields Railway has continued to run its tourist train operation from Waihi to Waikino and vice versa. The train timetable has been revamped to better reflect demand, where over the peak summer months (late December to Easter), the train would operate 7 days a week, and during the off peak, the train would operate 4 days a week (Thursdays to Sundays) on a reduced running schedule. Having enough Operational staff to run these trains has always been an issue, however in the past year, there have been a number of new volunteers who have put their hands up to help when needed. Thank you to the loco drivers, guards and hosts that ensure that the train is ready each time it operates.

In the past year Goldfields Railway carried some 34,700 passengers, compared with 29,000 passengers the previous year. Unfortunately, the weather, especially over summer was not kind to anybody and this also affected Goldfields Railway with both cyclone Hale and Gabrielle late January and early February, 2023 affecting the operations of the railway, with slips, fallen trees, flooded track all contributing to closing the railway until repairs were made and the rail track cleared. Many thanks to our volunteers who worked hard to reinstate the track so Goldfields Railway could continue to operate. And the atrocious weather just kept on continuing, affecting passenger numbers. The weather forecasters have stated that the 2023-2024 summer will be a lot drier, so let's hope so.

On the machinery side, a couple of additions were made to the operating fleet, when two DBr locomotives (1199 and 1282) arrived late last year. DBr 1199 has some provenance in that it was the loco that brought in the carriages back in 1980 that started Goldfields Steam Train Society off. Both DBRs are owned by one of our members, Dean McQuoid, however Goldfields Railway lease these for a peppercorn rental to operate when required. DBr1282 has been operational a number of times since its arrival, whilst DBr1199 has had some teething issues, which are slowly being sorted.

Of the locomotives owned by Goldfields Railway, Loco 6 is the mainstay of the fleet, and whilst it has had a few issues, these have been sorted and continues to be the main operating loco. Loco 7 had its motor fixed, last year and is a backup locomotive. The DSA (Loco 8) did suffer an issue early this year when the leading axle broke and the Management Committee are currently investigating replacement parts to get this loco up and running again.

The Rolling Stock - Goldfields Railway currently have operational 3 x carriages (Glenbrook, Tauranga and Newmarket cars), with the Addington car available if required, together with the Open car and

Bike wagon. Goldfields Railway has recently purchased a wagon which it is planned to turn into a bike wagon. The current bike wagon (Ug79) is now frequently at capacity with bikes, so having more capacity will assist in providing this vital service for the bikers that use the Hauraki Rail Trail.

Of the other rolling stock and locomotives in the yard, Goldfields Railway still has the Peckett Steam train, although non-operational, it is hoped to have it out on display over the summer months. Likewise, Loco 1, the Price Shunter (a.k.a. The Flyer), whilst operational, is not that suitable for Operational services on the line, although is used for shunting within the yard. Again, it is hoped to use this to pull out the Peckett Steam Train when displayed. Goldfields Railway also lease two further locomotives and wagons from Dean McQuoid - several flat deck wagons for carrying sleepers, rail and diggers, also several ballast wagons used for clearing slips and side drains, a DSC shunter and a Niigata shunter, with the Niigata recently becoming operational and being used operationally on the line.

Health and Safety

As advised at the beginning, Goldfields Railway were fortunate in having personal safety gear donated by Martinus Rail, NZ for use by the R & M Team members, plus some for Operational Staff. Also included were some new safety signage. Many thanks to Martinus Rail for their generosity.

Also, as stated previously, Goldfields Railway's Safety Case & System (Goldfields Railways operating manual) continues to be updated and these updates are approved by NZTA who issues the Rail Operating Licence that Goldfields Railway operates under. Goldfields Railway will continue to update its processes and procedures and make operational improvements to how it operates.

Monthly H & S Toolbox meetings are held so that those present are freely able to discuss any issues relating to health and safety or the processes under which Goldfields Railway operates.

Restoration and Maintenance (R & M)

2023 has been somewhat of a frustrating year for the R & M Team, however given all circumstances, been a productive year.

As common with the majority of voluntary organisations, the R & M Team have operated with very limited resources, 5 people in total (when they are all there at the same time) and have mainly been involved in maintenance issues, keeping the rolling stock operational and safe to use. For a fair portion of the year, there was only one loco operational. Majority of the maintenance issues are down to the age of the assets, and often what was initially was a minor problem, that escalates into something unexpected due to having no parts available or having to adapt a part to solve the issue. From time to time, the R & M Team have had to use outside contractors for their expertise in making repairs, which is an unfortunate part of running such an enterprise as the Railway, with its aging equipment.

Weather again, as mentioned previously, has affected the operational side of the railway. Glad to say, volunteers and staff leapt into the fray, minimising the downtime of the railway.

The Station buildings and precincts have had their planned work delayed due to the poor weather; however, this work is now starting in earnest to tidy up their appearance.

The restoration of the Guards Brake Van (F564) is nearing completion, however with the host of other tasks that needed to be done, it is hoped that the final push to have it completed will happen over the coming summer.

The R & M Team are also working on revitalising some of the operational rolling stock, with repainting some, cleaning and refreshing the interiors of some.

Baillie and the R & M Team will always welcome people to help out, whether it be on a regular basis (R & M Team are there Mondays and Thursdays) or just a helping hand from time to time. There are a wide variety of tasks that always seem needing to be done, so there is something to do for everyone.

Housing and Property

Goldfields Railway operates 5 x rental properties which provided a solid income of \$72,363 that goes towards the upkeep of the houses and Rolling Stock maintenance.

House 1 (3 Maddock St) has been had its exterior repainted and a new shed is currently going through the Council consent process to be installed to replace an existing shed that had not been placed within the property boundaries when installed many years ago.

A total of \$10,921 was spent on rental house maintenance, with the majority of this work was repairs to the exterior cladding of House 1, prior to painting. Most of this work was done by Stroney the Builder. In the other rentals, some leaks and minor repairs have been completed, together with some additional power points and updating smoke alarms. All houses have heat pumps and underfloor insulation as per the Tenancy Act. Chris Hale has undertaken some yard tidy ups, plus tree removal and weed spraying where required. All rents are up to date and the tenants are keeping the houses tidy. It is planned to start progressively repainting all the properties later this year. The rental properties are regularly inspected by Wrightson Real Estate, who provide a written report at each inspection for Goldfields Railway to follow up any matters that require attention.

The rentals on these properties were reviewed earlier this year, and were increased as from May this year.

The Traxx Shunters Cottage which operates as an Air B n B provided an additional income of \$40,311, but has also incurred cleaning and material expenses of \$19,168, providing a net surplus of \$21,143.

The camping ground continues to be well patronised providing additional income. It is planned to further upgrade the driveway and drainage in the camping ground later this year, so that the middle of the camping doesn't become a bog, like it did this year, with the incessant rain that we had.

The Grass Grooming Girl maintains the road edge berms along Wrigley St extension and the Hauraki Rail Trail parking areas, together with the camping ground and the Traxx Shunters Cottage. It is the responsibility of the tenants to maintain their rental's lawns.

Other properties:

Train (Carriage) Shed - Over the past reporting year, there have been improvements to the interior lighting in the Train (Carriage) Shed, together with new shelving along the side of the shed, so that

items can be stored safely and off the ground. Some of the shelving has been used to store some equipment that was previously stored in the Goods Shed and thanks must go to Dean McQuoid, Brian and Thomas Rae for their hard work in moving the equipment across. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of equipment that needs to be stored on the shelving from the Goods Shed. The Management Committee have also agreed to seek quotations for extensions to the Train Shed to better serve Goldfields Railway in the future. This is still at the planning stage, however as things progress, more information will be forthcoming.

The Management Committee has also approved a quote to replace the slowly rusting roof on the Train (Carriage) Shed, which is now planned to be started in December, 2023. As part of the re-roofing, there will be the installation of nova-roof to improve the natural lighting for the Train Shed.

Goods Shed – As stated above, a start was made to tidy up the equipment in the Goods Shed so that it is basically emptied out, so that suitable tradesmen could evaluate the Goods Shed with a view to get it restored to its former glory. Once the tidy up has been completed then it will become clearer to all what work is required.

Other Station Buildings – Basic maintenance has done to maintain these buildings, however in the next few years, Goldfields Railway will need to look at repainting some of these buildings. The current lunchroom is also coming in for some much-needed TLC with it being re-roofed, and painted inside and generally tidied up. The jigger sheds alongside line 1 will also receive some attention, tidying up and repainting to improve the appearance of the area.

Fertiliser Shed property (Robin St site) – Goldfields Railway have taken back the leases to the tenants on this property early 2023 and have renegotiated new leases, with reduced areas being leased, so that Goldfields Railway could now utilise some of land, which they couldn't do under the previous lease and Goldfields Railway have actually increased the rental income from the reduced area tenancy agreements. The fertiliser shed on the property is in poor condition and there is another project to strengthen the roof structure to make the building safer. Work is now progressing to have this completed as soon as practical.

Miniature Railway

Unfortunately, 'red tape' saw the miniature railway inoperable for a fair portion of the year, due to having a safety review done, then obtaining an operating licence so it could run. Both have now been obtained and the miniature railway recently recommenced operations. As with its larger cousin, the constant inclement weather also hampered operational aspects and work on improving the layout of the miniature railway. Dave Cole is the mainstay of the miniature railway and is currently working to extend the railway by another 160 metres. The plans of the extension of the railway have been curtailed somewhat due to a lack of people to assist Dave with the build, which he is basically doing single handily. If you would like to assist, there are a host of tasks to be done like planting some natives, finishing off the Mini Rail Station building and just general maintenance. Dave is ably assisted on operating days by Linda Cumming. The Miniature Railway operates every second Sunday from 11:00am to 2:00pm or later, if necessary.

Infrastructure

Work continues on improving the rail track between Waihi and Waikino with work to start shortly on replacing wooden sleepers along the track with the concrete sleepers ex KiwiRail. The better wooden sleepers taken out will be repurposed and utilised in the rail yards at both Waihi Station

and Waikino Station. Thanks to Dean McQuoid for his contacts in securing the concrete sleepers and his efforts in getting the sleepers from Auckland to Waihi.

Work has also commenced on tidying up the bridges on the rail line, removing trees that are overhanging the rail line in an effort to reduce ongoing maintenance.

In summarising, even though there are only a few volunteers, quite a large amount of work is being done to tidy up the railway. Like everything, it all takes time, however if we all continue to chip away at it, the improvements will start to become more evident and allow Goldfields Railway to continue to operate in the future, as it has done for the past 43 years.

Thank you for listening.
Greg Stilwell
Secretary

Thank you to our Newsletter Editor

Fiona Liddell, our Newsletter Editor for the past 18 months, has decided to hang up her editor's hat, with the December 2023 issue being her last as editor.

With the recent, unexpected passing of our Chairperson, Graeme Martin, Fiona had been working with Graeme, firstly collating articles for the Newsletter, making sure that a newsletter went out to the membership and was also collating feedback and putting together an updated Constitution for Goldfields Railway Incorporated so that Goldfields Railway Inc. conforms with the new Incorporated Societies Act of 2022. Fiona has also been instrumental, together with both Graeme and Dave Cole, to getting the various paperwork sorted so that the Waihi Mini Rail can now operate legally.

On behalf of the membership and Management Committee of Goldfields Railway Inc., thank you for helping out firstly Graeme and attending to those thankless tasks that nobody wants to do, however need to be done. Enjoy your break.

Many thanks.

Greg Stilwell
Secretary



Great Train Robbery 2023

Goldfields Railway's Great Train Robbery took place again this year on Saturday, 7 October, 2023 and it was hoped that Goldfields did not have a repetition of the last Great Train Robbery that took

place just as Cyclone Hale decided to hit the North Island of New Zealand on Auckland Anniversary weekend 2023.

The weather leading up to the weekend had been glorious sunny weather, however the forecast for Saturday, 7 October, 2023 was somewhat gloomy, predicting showers turning to rain later in the day. Whilst the day did start out overcast, the predicted showers and rain held off until mid-afternoon allowing the “robberies” to take place.

In the lead up to the event, there had been media coverage about the Great Train Robbery with Coromandel FM undertaking a live interview with the Secretary as to what was to take place. Public interest was high with a considerable number choosing to book for the “robbery” - an unusual concept to say the least.



Come Saturday morning, people arrived and kept on arriving, some dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls, young and old and with all available carriages (Newmarket, Glenbrook, Tauranga cars), plus the Open Car waiting at the Waihi Station platform, being headed by DBRs 1199 and 1282 to pull the anticipated weight, everything was set.

At 9:45am (on time), the train, loaded with 180+ expectant passengers, departed Waihi Station. A number of the younger passengers on board, had their ‘cap’ guns ready to challenge the “robbers” and as the train made its way to Waikino as normal. As the train approached Schulers’ Crossing (8802 SH 2), the Cowboy and his ‘gang of robbers’ then rode on horseback alongside the

train requesting it so stop, which of course it did. The Cowboy and his gang, complete with an Indian, then made their way onto the train, and whilst they initially asked for peoples’ wallets, phones and other valuables, then started handing out ‘Crunchie Bars’ to the children on board. Of course, there had to be photos to be taken with the ‘robbers’ and having exhausted their supply of ‘Crunchie Bars’, allowed the train to proceed with its journey to Waikino, where Mum and Dad loaded up with caffeine, before returning safely to Waihi.

Those on the Open Car waiting to be 'robbed'.



Having arrived back at Waihi, the Waihi Station platform was jammed packed with more passengers wanting to experience a “robbery”. The logistics of getting 180 people off a train and get another 180+ people on board, was done with the expertise and efficiency that the Japanese Rail System would have been proud of. However, contrary to the Japanese Rail System, the train did leave late!

And so, another 180+ ‘robbery victims’ were about to be subjected to another ‘robbery’. Back at Schulers’ Crossing, the Cowboy and his gang were waiting and repeated their antics from the 9:45am trip. With the obligatory photos taken with the

robbers, the train continued on its journey to Waikino uninterrupted any further.



Although Goldfields Railway only organised the “robberies” on the 9:45am and 11:30am trips to Waikino, those who hopped on the train for the 1:45pm trip (approx. 50 people), although they didn’t get the “robbery experience”, the children still got a “Crunchie Bar”. When Goldfields Railway holds the next Great Train Robbery, these people will be on the earlier trips to experience the “robbery!”.



Some points to note – a 50g Crunchie Bar can be devoured in under a minute, with some looking for more, although, it would be suggested that the parents of some children felt that their ‘charges’ had had their sugar intake for the next week. There were also a number of people who are unaware that the Great Train Robbery was taking place and this made their trip on The Goldfields Express even more memorable.

Anyway, a very successful day and 99.99% of participants enjoyed themselves immensely. Just shows what reasonable weather can do for an event.

Many thanks must go to the Cowboy and his “gang of robbers”, who without their and their steeds (horses) participation, wouldn’t make the day the success that it was. Then to the staff and volunteers of Goldfields Railway, from Laura and Robyn in the ticket office getting tickets to the

passengers, to Stan, Steve, Gordon and Greg on the train who got everyone on and off the train safely and to the locomotive engineers, Dean and Dave, who kept the train running to Goldfields Railway’s normal timetable, as well as having to stop the train at ‘robbers’ request. Thanks also to Harminder Singh and his team at Waihi New World who organised the ‘Crunchie Bars’ that were consumed by the ravenous children.

Thanks to Steve Walker and Dean McQuoid for these photos

Hauraki District Council Spring Tourism Hui - 2 wheeled Tourism, Tuesday 14/11/2023

Treasurer, Chris Hale and Secretary, Greg Stilwell recently attended a Hui which was made up of key Tourism people within the Hauraki/Coromandel area, as well as retailers offering various services, including food, accommodation, bike hire (both pedal power and motorcycle power), Hauraki Rail Trail personnel and the like.

There was a panel discussion which included what each can do to assist one another to make, specifically the various Rail Trails around Hauraki District, a more viable asset to the area. Department of Conservation (DoC) were noticeably absent, as especially at Karangahake, a number of the walks are still out of action, especially the ‘Windows’ walk, which most people stop at Karangahake to do. It is hoped that this will be cleared and operational in early course. DoC are currently assessing Geotech reports so they can then undertake works to have the various walks reopened.

Work is underway to have a planned event where up to 1,000 people will use Waihi to Paeroa Rail Trail in the new year of 2024. There will be huge volumes of bikes. Overseas tourists are now returning and many are undertaking the various rail cycle trails - the 5 in Hauraki are included in the

Great Cycle Rides of New Zealand. This year (on Auckland Anniversary weekend), a group of 100 cyclists from overseas had hoped to undertake the various rides within Hauraki on hired bikes. Needless to say, it didn't happen due to Cyclone Hale, so the group went onto Hawkes Bay and we all know what happened there with Cyclone Gabrielle. Advance bookings so far for the rest of this year and early next year are looking good.

Goldfields Railway Rolling Stock and Infrastructure update

The following is a roundup of the trials and tribulations of running an historic tourism railway and dealing with old equipment.

Tauranga Car (Aa 1678)

Goldfields Railway are undertaking a 'refreshing' of Aa 1678 in readiness for the upcoming summer season, which climate experts advise, should be warm and dry - a complete contrast to the 2022 – 2023 summer.

So, what's being done?

- Interior wise is replacement of worn seat squabs and a good internal clean and polish, which will include the wooden floors as well as a thorough clean and treatment of the existing seat squabs.
- Externally, working from top to bottom, the roof will be steam cleaned to remove a few years deposits of dust and grime. The external walls, especially the platform side of the car, will be sanded down and repainted to improve its appearance, as well as both ends of the carriage (initially only a thorough clean), with the porch railings and handrails repainted. The buffers and chassis will also have a good clean in preparation for a respray to make the carriage fresh again, appearance wise.
- As part of this process, all aspects of the carriage will be checked to ensure that everything operates as it should.

It has been some while that the Tauranga Car has had some love and attention bestowed upon it and being the mainstay passenger of the fleet, it is well overdue.

Once the Tauranga Car (Aa 1678) has been 'refreshened', after the summer peak season, Goldfields Railway will slowly work through the rest of the operational passenger car fleet with the Open Car (Ea 3868) getting similar treatment and so on.

Loco 6

Our main operational loco recently developed an overheating issue and is currently undergoing repairs to replace head gaskets, together with exhaust gaskets. At the same time, the injectors will be removed, serviced and reinstalled, so that Loco 6 will continue to provide the reliable service that this Loco is known for. Northern Automotive from Katikati, are assisting with this work and it is hoped that Loco 6 will be up and running, as it normally would prior to Xmas.

Over the summer peak season, it is planned for the 'Tasman' Niigata and DBRs 1199 and 1282 to assist with the operational workload and be used more frequently late December and throughout January, 2024.

Ug79 – Bike Wagon and proposed new bike wagon – LB wagon

Over the past couple of years, Ug79 sometimes has struggled with capacity issues due to the number of recreational bikers whose legs tend to fail them when they see the train at Waikino Station. The

current capacity for bikes of Ug79 currently is around 22, depending on the type of bike. As E-bike technology evolves, with larger batteries and electric motors, so has the size of E-Bikes. To carry the extra weight, tyres have become fatter and wider, so Goldfields Railway bike wagon has to evolve with these changes.



Whilst Ug79 has served Goldfields Railway very well over the many years that it has been in service, the Management Committee made a decision to look at other options to assist with the increased requirement of transporting bikes between Waihi and Waikino and vice versa. Goldfields Railway now have an LB Wagon (pictured), which it is hoped will be able to turn into a suitable bike wagon. The LB wagon is wider than Ug79, so it is hoped to arrange the bike

racking so that more bikes can be carried. The other benefit, is the use of a centre opening - Ug79 currently has its access point at one end, thus making loading and unloading bikes difficult and time consuming. It is hoped that in the next newsletter, the upgraded LB wagon will be shown in full operational use.

Infrastructure upgrades

Waihi Station - The Waihi Station platform area has seen some improvements with the platform edge repainted in white, and also clearer 'KEEP CLEAR' signage painted on the platform between the yellow (don't stand past line) and the platform edge. The aforementioned yellow - don't stand past line - will be painted in due course.

The wooden fence beside the Waihi Station building has been cleaned in preparation for repainting in white, as per the original picket fence was in earlier days and the fence line leading down to the train (carriage) shed - the railway iron uprights have been repainted white, with the wire fence, re-tensioned. The railway iron uprights next to the track at the end of the platform, have also been repainted in yellow and this area now looks much tidier.

Bridge 11 over the Waitete Stream - Ashton Baird has rectified some rust issues that had been raised in our Annual Bridge Inspection reports using a mobile gantry system, so that he could get under the bridge safely. This work has largely been completed, despite the weather not helping - seems to rain during the weekends at the moment.

Fertiliser Shed roof re-strengthening - Ashton has been busy co-ordinating the repairs to the roof



structure of the fert shed on the property at Robin St, Waihi, which Goldfields Railway owns. The fert shed is currently leased to JP Vogels who utilises it to store his fertiliser for his spreading business, and over the years, this building has been 'abused' by previous owners, so as the roof structure was in poor state of structural repair (was being held up with pieces of timber), it was decided to fix it properly, and new beams have been inserted recently to support the roof structure instead of the pieces of wood (see photo). Thanks must go to Ashton, his dad, Ross, Dean McQuoid and Kevin Ryan for getting this

structural support in place in some trying conditions.



Graeme Martin

11/12/1948 – 24/10/2023

It was with much sadness that Graeme passed away recently. Graeme was Goldfields Railway's current Chairperson and was looking forward to standing as Chairperson for a further term.



When Graeme retired from work, he volunteered his services at Goldfields Railway, taking on various roles, helping out where-ever Graeme could.

Graeme was elected to the Management Committee of Goldfields Railway at the 2002 AGM, before doing a stint as Secretary after being elected at the 2003 AGM before serving as President after being elected at the 2009 AGM. Graeme continued to be involved in varying roles, including in charge of the Restoration and Maintenance Team before ill health forced Graeme to take a back seat for a while. In 2021, Graeme took on the role as Health and Safety Officer, a role that he was passionate about, before stepping down from the role early in 2023. After the AGM of 2022 when there were no nominations for a Chairperson, Graeme made himself available as Chairperson and continued with that role up to his passing. Graeme had a lot of knowledge through his years volunteering at Goldfields Railway, which he would readily pass this on to anyone who would stop to listen. Graeme was part of the group that revamped and updated Goldfields Railway's Safety System and Case, by which the railway operates and catalogued, with assistance from other members, an asset register – no mean feat when there was literally 1,000's of items that needed to be put into a format and documented.

Graeme was also very good in getting his siblings involved at Goldfields Railway with his twin sister Carolyn and his elder brother Don being heavily involved in getting things done.

When President, Graeme stated that he would rather be known as Chairman or Facilitator as he considered his task was to get committee members doing things and opening up better lines of communication, something that Graeme was still doing. Graeme saw the importance of Newsletter to the membership and together with Fiona Liddell, ensured one was published regularly. On site, Graeme reckoned he was there only worker and "not in charge". He wanted to look to the future and concentrate on track maintenance and the upgrading of the Waitete bridge at that time.

Graeme's passion for Goldfields Railway stemmed from his association with the area and considered Goldfields Railway a Class I historical precinct as it was the only railway in N.Z. "with that historical tag and all the buildings were original". His aim was to make Goldfields Railway an absolute integral part of the Waihi community and always tried to convince others to join the railway and volunteer their time.



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Graeme was keen to get steam re-introduced back to our railway, so a "Back to Steam" sub-committee of 5 members was set up in April, 2010 which produced monthly reports to the main committee. Graeme stated at the time that the return of steam was a case of when, not if, and was hopeful that it would be within two years. A public meeting was held in December 2009 attended by 24 to discuss the matter. The sub-committee was only disbanded when a new President took over the helm at the 2011 AGM.

Rest in peace Graeme.



HISTORY

Following is the third instalment of our booklet called "Rail through the Karangahake", which we started in the June newsletter.

Compiled by John L. Stichbury

Published by the Railway Enthusiasts Society Incorporated March 14th 1963. Reprinted 2014 by Goldfields Railway Society using original publication.

PART 3

The Waihi Gold Mines Railway

The first little steam tank locomotives for this railway arrived in New Zealand in 1897 but prior to this date it is thought that horse traction was used to operate this most interesting railway.

A total of 6 tank locomotives worked on the railway and three were in use right up until the last train ran in the winter of 1952. Route mileage was about 8 miles and the line was laid to a gauge of 2'9". Rails of from 40-45lbs per yard were used and the grade 1 in 100 for loaded trains and 1 in 40 against empty trains working back from Waikino. Usual maximum load for the locos leaving Waikino battery was 70 tons and returning from the Waihi mines 120 tons in four-wheel tip trucks. There were also a few goods wagons and flat top wagons and some of the flat tops were fitted with seats for carrying passengers as shown in our illustrations on page 2. The line was never a common carrier though and workmen travelling on these wagons must have had many a cold wet trip in this area where rainfall often exceeds 100 inches a year and severe winter frosts are frequent. Almost all the traffic was quartz from the various mines in the Waihi Borough to the crushers and battery at Waikino.

Mines, winding houses, pumping stations, railway and battery are now all gone only foundations and few buildings remain. Even the railway is becoming hard to trace as farmers plough across old track bed and in the Borough buildings are erected across the line of the track, but the keen explorer can still trace the track. At the Waikino end the railway had its exchange sidings with the 3'6" State system and with its locomotive depot very near to the NZR Bridge over the Ohinemuri River and one portion of the shed still stands. (As does the substation once used by the Waihi Gold Mines who had their own generating plant on the Waikato River and own transmission lines from it to Waikino and Waihi. This line still stands in places). The 2'9" then followed the opposite bank of the river to

the NZR for three miles before crossing it on a bridge which appears to have been a combined road, rail and water race bridge! There was a 40-foot-deep rock cutting in the riverside section. The line now climbed steeply through open farmland up to the Waihi Railway station passing along the south side of the then yard to pass under the NZR near the eastern end of the long curving bridge east of Waihi Station. It then ran through the Borough passing over Seddon Street, near the imposing remains of No. 5 winding and pumping house then branching out to the various mine shafts. The line rose over 200 feet in its 8 miles.

Details of the locomotives as published in the "New Zealand Railway Observer" June 1947 (supplied by Mr. WW Stewart) were:

"Ohinemuri" built 1896 by Manning Wardle, Leeds, England. Makers No. 1329.

"Victoria" built 1896 by Manning Wardle, Leeds, England. Makers No. 1424.

The first was delivered as an O-4-OT with square saddle tank and canopy cab. It was altered later to O-4-2T and a windshield added to back of cab. The Victoria was built as an O-4-2T. Both weighed about 16 tons, had 30" diameter driving wheels and 2 cylinders 9"x14".

"Albert" supplied by same firm in 1900, weighed 18 tons, had closed in cab and bunker and fair-sized dome appeared above the tanks, otherwise similar.

"Waikino" built by the same firm again, in 1905 (Makers No. 1497) was a big step forward. It was a 4-4-2T side tank with big dome, cylinders set midway along running board and outside Walschaerts valve gear. A fine-looking locomotive, it weighed 20 tons, had two 10"x16" cylinders, 30" diameter drivers, carried 150lbs (or possibly later 200lbs) boiler pressure, and a rigid wheelbase of 4'3" of a total wheelbase of 18 feet. This is the engine in our photo on page two taken 45 years after the engine was built!

"Dominion" was obtained from the firm in 1909 C and was a full sister to "Waikino". She later had a new boiler from Kitsons of Leeds.

The sixth and last locomotive was "Empire", a 2-4-2 side tank built by the WG Bagnall Ltd works at Stafford (Makers No. 2513) in 1934. This solid looking locomotive had side tanks running right up to the front of the smoke box, weighed 20 tons, fixed wheelbase was 4'9" out of 16'6". The two cylinders were 10"x16". Boiler pressure was 180lbs per square inch. Grate area 7.72 sq. feet and heating surface 413 sq. feet. Coupled wheels were as usual 30" diameter bogie wheels, 22" diameter and 500 gallons of water and 27 cubic feet of coal were carried. The engine was fitted with the most unusual, in New Zealand, Bagulely type of valve gear.

Writing in the "Observer" in July 1952 Mr. LJ Hostick noted that the "Waikino" and "Dominion" were working the quartz trains, "Empire" was under repair and "Albert" was out of service on 1st December 1951.

All the locomotives together with all other usable scrap were cut up and sold probably to Japan in the period 1956-59, the yield of scrap as was to be expected was great as Waihi Gold Mines notably Martha Gold Mines were a huge and successful undertaking. And so is history made.

Private Bush Railways

The Baker Timber Co. operated timber lines for many years on the Matakana Island and an Auckland built 0-4-0 diesel and other railway equipment lying near Katikati are believed to be shipped from the island in the late 1940's. At Katikati also KDV Box Co. operated a short tram during 1920-early 40's. At Waihi itself the Tamaki Sawmilling Co. had a tramway running southwards into the bush.

Another tram was that at Waitawheta, a tiny settlement south from the now closed Owharoa station. This included a grade steeper than 1 in 15 but was not worked by locomotives. Kauri Timber Company owned the line.

Signaling

From a very early date tablet working was in force from Paeroa to Waihi with a tablet station at Karangahake (later a switch out then a holiday switch out station) and tablet locked sidings at Awakino, Martha Gold Mines Battery, Owharoa and tunnel relief siding in the gorge. A bank engine key was provided for use between Paeroa and Awharoa, even apparently when Karangahake was switched out. Today between Te Aroha and Waihi we have New Zealand's second longest tablet section just under 24 miles long, broken only by the Paeroa South switch out station. A bank engine key is installed (page 20).

In the tablet machine at Paeroa South allowing the engine to assist trains in the rear to 5 miles 40 chains, a point not far beyond tunnel relief siding. With the opening of the cut off both Karangahake and Waitoki holiday switch out tablet stations were closed. Waitoki (whose tablet machine is preserved in the Railway Enthusiasts Society Museum in Onehunga) was opened in 1930 and was half way between Te Aroha and Paeroa.

In 1947 single line automatic signaling with searchlight type colour light signals was brought unto use between Waihi and Tauranga, previously worked as an "open section".

Line Alterations

Apart from much trouble with slumping hillsides near Katikati and the extension of a few crossing loops and yards, notably at Waihi, the only major alterations to this line have been made in the Paeroa area.

At Paeroa the pre-1914 war station and yard was like most of the town flood prone and when large new stop banks were built in the mid-1920's the railways built new high level twin bridges over the Ohinemuri River and at the same time shifted the Paeroa station 40 chains or more further north. An extensive layout, it was later altered ready for the connection from the Pokeno station on the Auckland-Frankton line. Alas, this high speed easily graded railway on which much earthwork was complete has now been taken off the list of railways being built and land has been returned to the owners. The modern colour light signaling, large yard and locomotive depot and other facilities at Paeroa never welcomed a train from Pokeno. At first this Paeroa station had semaphore signals and from the look of the building it seems likely that most of the 1913 station was included in the present building. In later years the building was extended and a new stopping place was opened near the site of the old station. Known as Paeroa Township it boasted as shelter shed the old MacKay town station building.

On 20th July 1959 the Paeroa South cut off was opened. It leaves the old line at 42 miles 27 chains and passes around a 17-chain curve to join the Paeroa-Waihi line very near to milepost 1. A new station was built here for passengers and small lots of goods traffic and as the junction. Four long loops cater for goods tonnage for the Thames branch or reduced off eastbound trains. At the north end of the loop the Thames branch curves north, there being a tablet section from Paeroa South to Paeroa. Colour light signals are installed. The deviation resulted in a saving in distance of 3¼ miles

for all trains going east and large savings in time as the reversal at Paeroa was cut completely out. It will be noted though that all mile posts east of Paeroa South still read from the old zero point where Thames and Waihi line joined and thus are about a mile in excess of the actual mileage from the Paeroa South station.

Karangahake has now lost its goods shed and station building and its crossing loop. Waikino has been completely removed from the timetable as have Mackaytown and Owharoa, although the goods shed remains at Waikino. The Tunnel Relief Siding holding about 10 wagons on a back shunt is about half a mile from the east portal of the tunnel. Borell Road is a new stopping place for railcars between Omokoroa and Te Puna.

Locomotives

On the Waihi branch line, the early "C", "D" and "L" class tank locomotives were used with a regular engine shedded in the Waihi shed. As no turntable was ever provided at Waihi it seems likely that some 4-6-4 tank locomotives also worked here in the 1920's. However, with the opening of the East Coast Main Trunk the line at once became a "pacific" stronghold with "A" and "Ab" classes handling all the traffic east of Paeroa until the advent of the "J" class 4-8-2's in 1940. These three classes shared the duties until the "A"s were withdrawn in early 1950's, and later that decade the arrival of the "D" class 1500hp diesel electrics. It seems most unlikely that any 4-6-4 tank locomotives ever worked in the Bay of Plenty although we have been unable to confirm this fact.

Today the work is shared between the "Df" and "J" classes with railcars catering for passenger traffic. "De", "Dg" and "Da" locomotives have all been seen but are only allowed to work light engine to and from Kawerau.

A feature up to 9th February 1959 (when railcars took over) was the regular "Ab" (or earlier up until 1949 at least "A"s were used) working of the Taneatua Expresses from the terminus to Paeroa and back, a 222-mile round trip often including a run to Tauranga before and after! A log of a run in 1952 records No. 739 recording maximum speeds over 50mph and a 20mph climb of Athenree bank with a 6 total Express. Another regular working was the use of the engine which had brought the train from Frankton to assist in the rear up to Owharoa. Thus, on 12th October 1948 the 7:15am mixed from the Waikato left Paeroa for Tauranga with "A" 581 (with shrill whistle) at the front and "J" 1211 attached behind the rear carriage up through the tunnel, giving passengers quite an awesome but daily experience!

Today with locomotive depots at Paeroa and Tauranga banking is still a regular feature from Paeroa South to 5 miles 40 chain often with a "J" shedded at Paeroa. At other times two "Df" or a "Df" and a "J" double head through from Frankton to Waihi or beyond.

CAMPER VAN ROLLS ONTO RAIL LINE - SH2



In early October, 2023, Goldfields Railway received a call from a number of people advising that a campervan had come to rest on the rail lines beside SH 2 and maybe, we should check it out.

Fortunately, this incident happened in the early evening and there were no trains operating at the time. By the time that Goldfields Railway staff arrived at the accident site, the campervan had been removed and all emergency personnel had left, with flattened roadside vegetation being the only sign that a drama had occurred there an hour beforehand. Whilst the above photo shows the campervan resting close to the rail tracks, it didn't quite reach the rail lines, so there was no damage to the rail infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said for the campervan. It was carted off to the wrecking yard. The occupants of the van, a young couple who had arrived in New Zealand two days earlier to see the sights of New Zealand, very fortunately, were not seriously injured, although, it would be suggested that their original plans literally came crashing down around them.

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