



Goldfields Railway

Newsletter

March 2023

Welcome back to a New Year at Goldfields. We have received a couple of large Christmas presents here in the way of 2 x engines to be restored and will tell you about them a bit later in this newsletter. We welcome new readers and if you know of any person or organisation that would benefit from receiving this newsletter please drop us a line and we'll send one out to them. Alternatively, if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter please let us know.

Chairperson's Report:

Recently the railway has not been spared during our alleged summer; from earthquakes and flooding with extreme weather conditions. Although we fared reasonably well, our main line had to be fully checked and cleared after every event, prior to passenger service commencing for the day. We did lose a couple of days due to infrastructure damage, but overall we did not experience any major disruptions.

Our sincere thanks to all those staff members who turned out for duty following these events; especially to Greg and Dean. This did mean a really early start for the work trains staff, often not in nice conditions. Thankfully there were only minor issues, but I expect that the drivers for these trains were apprehensive as they never knew what was around the next corner.

Once again guys, your efforts are really appreciated.

Graeme Martin
Chairperson

This month we are introducing another of our volunteers to you. Most of you will already know him but for those who don't its always great to put a face to a name.

Chris Hale - Treasurer

A bit of background

Born in 1948 in Gisborne and brought up on a sheep and cattle station of 6000 acres that lay under Mt's Hikurangi and Aorangi near Ruatoria.

Rode my horse to school 7 miles as a six year old to the Makarika primary school. Thirty-six pupils and only five pakeha kids.



Went to boarding schools at St Peters in Cambridge at 8, and then to Christs College in Christchurch at 13.

I loved boarding school and all the sports and music that was available to play.

My school holidays were spent on the farm and horses were the essential transport as the countryside was very steep.

I attended and participated in Rodeos and rounding up wild horses.

Mum and Dad sold the farm in 1965 and moved to Tauranga.

I left College in Dec 1965 and started work in an accountants' office and studied Accountancy by night school.

In 1969 having passed 5 accounting subjects out of 9, I travelled to Australia, surfed Manly for 2 weeks and then hitchhiked via South Australia and the Nullabor to Kalgoorlie. I arrived with A\$8.50 in my pocket! Got a job the next day and worked for a Mining exploration company and camped in the bush for a week at a time taking soil samples looking for Gold. After 4 months, I moved on with some money to Perth. Here I applied for work on the Oilrigs and eventually flew to Barrow Is off the coast from Carnarvon 600 mile north of Perth.

I started on the rig as a roughneck and worked 7 weeks on and a week off back in Perth. The Rig operated 3 shifts Daylight (8am to 4pm), Afternoons (4pm to Midnight) and Graveyard shift (Midnight to 8am) All food and accommodation was provided and 1 large bottle of beer a day. Sometimes I traded my bottle with the "Campie" who did all my washing for a bottle (yes, he was alcoholic but otherwise a good guy).

After 7 weeks, we went on a week's leave in Perth. After two days, one of the guys from my crew was asking me for a loan - 7 weeks' pay had been frittered away in 2 days!!!!

We had a great time and worked hard and I progressed to Motorman and then up to being Derrick man. If you didn't have a head for heights, you didn't do this job. There was only 1 Derrick man in each crew so if one was sick and the other on leave you worked some long hours and made good money.

After 8 months, my mate and I were the longest serving employees on the rig. The Aussies couldn't hack it and found easier ways to make money

When my mate and I left the Oil Rig, we hitched north to Darwin and brought a Mark II Zephyr Station Wagon for A\$300, which we lived in for the next 3 weeks as we travelled across the north to Cairns and Mackay. Then we travelled leisurely back to Sydney and sold the Zephyr for \$200 as it still had 4 months registration left.

Back in NZ I was going to return to the office but my Dad said “No way son you can come and do some real work”. So I began in the logging industry working around Tauranga, Waihi, Rotorua and Whangamata. I learnt to cut down trees both Pine and Native, operate a Bulldozer, drive a loader and a logging truck. 3 years later I had met Liz and thought I needed to find a more stable job before we were married in 1974 and I had also found I had Type 1 diabetes. Therefore, I went to work for the PYE factory in Waihi in the Accounting Dept.

This was boring so I started to look at the Shipping and Importing of the materials for the factory and the Import Licensing. I spent 3 years studying and became a Licensed Customs Agent looking after Importing and Exporting for the Factory. A takeover by Philips saw all the shipping work go to Auckland. I didn't want to move so was appointed Administration Manager looking after Property Leases and eventually plant closures in Hamilton, Paeroa and Waihi (1986) and setting up a 3 day Auction for all the Plant and materials. It was a success and I stayed in town as I had just built a new house and worked with businesses to transition to mining, which was just beginning again.

Liz and I had two children Jarrod (b1976) and Susan (b1978).

After a year, I was appointed as Economic Development Manager with the Regional Development Council covering Matamata Piako, Hauraki and Thames Coromandel. This involved supporting business growth in these districts. During 12 years in this role, I worked with businesses all over the region to help fund development of new ideas and industry. This role was politically driven to support developing regions of which Thames Valley was one. Just prior to its closing down the Hauraki Mayor of the time (Basil Morrison 1995) asked if I could look at Goldfields Railway and see what could be done to support it? A Business Appraisal was undertaken by Bob Thompson and paid for by my group.

It recommended splitting the Operational side of the Railway from the Railway Society and their train enthusiasts. More later.

I had taken on a paid role with Hauraki District Council and Newmont Mining to liaise *between* the Waihi Community and the Mining Company while they expanded the pit size to what it is today. This lasted for 2 years until the pit rim had been established and then I took on a role with Hauraki District Council as Economic Development Officer to work across the district with businesses. I did this for the next 12 years and retired from paid employment in 2013. My last project being assisting with the development and funding for the Waihi Discovery Centre.

Back to Goldfields Railway 1995.

An Operations Board was established and I was asked to Chair that Board on a voluntary basis. The Board's focus was on operating a financially successful heritage railway and to

make sure funds were available to maintain the Rolling stock and the Railway. The Society were to look at the Heritage aspects and restoration works.

This enabled Goldfields Railway to build a sound operational base that exists today.

Over the years, we have experienced many problems that come with operating a lot of old rolling stock and older railway line including track rebuild, replacement of three bridges and finding locomotives that can provide the service our customers expect.

The Operations Board eventually combined back with the Society and today we have an eight Person Management Committee that meets monthly and reports annually to the Society Members.

Our main sources of income come from Ticket Sales, House rentals and fundraising.

Funding has always been a major constraint and Lotteries Environment and Heritage, the Lion Foundation, Trust Waikato, The Valder Ohinemuri Trust and the Hauraki District Council have provided invaluable support over the past 25 years.

The work of Volunteers over this time has been essential and without them the Railway would not have survived

As a business operation, we have had to operate under what is now Waka Kotahi and undergo annual audit to gain our annual operating Licence.

Health and Safety has been a prime focus and involved additional costs to ensure we offer a safe environment for our passengers

From time to time, we have had paid staff to fill roles as General Manager, Track Manager, Operations Manager and Office Staffing. Not all have been as successful as we would have liked but all have contributed to keeping the Railway operational.

During the past 25 years, I have undertaken roles as Operations Board Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Operations Manager and today I am the Treasurer and Housing Manager

Unfortunately, our membership is getting older and while we have tried to involve younger people in the ongoing Railway, we have not been successful with one exception.

Goldfields has a strong future with introduction of Dean McQuoid's talents and locos and Rolling stock.

Engines DBR119 & DBR1282

As many of you would be aware, we took delivery of 2 x engines back in November 2022.

Here is a little bit more information for your reading pleasure...

Locomotive DBR1199 (one of 17) and a lighter version of the DA locomotive was purchased from EMD/General Motors Diesel Ltd, Canada in 1965/6 by New Zealand Railways to operate on secondary and branch lines, and was designated DB1006.

They are of A1A-A1A wheel configuration which means 6 axles overall but the middle axle on each bogie is unpowered. They were fitted with EMD 567C 2-cycle 8 cylinder diesel engines of the 950 HP, generating power to the electric traction motors.

The locomotive now numbered DB1199 saw service on many branch lines, and especially on the East Coast Main Trunk line, often banked, usually in a push-pull configuration with two engines. The Kaimai tunnel opened in 1978 and in 1982/3, the Paeroa to Apata line was pulled up, trains now using the shorter more direct route from Auckland to Tauranga. The 6.55 kilometre length of track between Waihi and Waikino is all that remains of this line.

Between 1980 and 1982, 10 of the DB engines were rebuilt by Clyde Engineering in Australia and Designated DBR (the R is short for rebuilt). The refurbishment included lowering the short-hoods for better driver forward visibility. New cabs and updated EMD 8-645C engines were installed. The locomotive was renumbered DBR1199.

In 2003, DBR1199 was refurbished for the Auckland commuter service and painted in the full MAXX blue (deep blue and yellow) livery. The locomotive was taken out of service in 2013 and stored at the Hutt railway depot.

DBR1199 was purchased in 2017 by DBM Contractors Ltd and in 2022, together with DBR1282 was railed to Mt Maunganui by KiwiRail and trucked to the Goldfields Railway depot, arriving there on 20 November 2022.

On 8th November 1980, DB1199 headed a “special” train with passenger carriages, a guards van and two LA wagons belonging to Goldfields Railway, to the Waihi railway station. It was the last train to stop at Waihi before the East Coast line closed for good.

From the Pages of Our History: History of Waihi Railway Houses

Taken from NZ Historic Places Trust, Waihi Railway Station Historic Area Report

Researched and written by Jamie Mackay – July 1994

With the expansion of NZ’s railways in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there came the problem of housing the itinerant railway workers. While some housing was provided by the Railways Department before 1919, it was from this date that the need to provide readily available, low cost housing close to both rural and urban railway stations throughout New Zealand became apparent. Under William Ferguson Massey (1856-1925), Minister of Railways, the Department decided to enter into a large scale housing scheme which would provide housing for all permanent members of its staff.

Headed by George Troup, (who designed the Waihi Station) the Architectural Branch of the Railways Department was established in late 1919 to design and supervise the construction of what became known as “railway houses”. The scheme involved the mass production of

architecturally designed houses, pre-cut at a factory (also designed by Troup) in Frankton. Frankton Junction was chosen as the site for the house factory because of its central location and the large number of employees in the area. The factory was erected in 1921-22 and cutting began in mid 1923. Standardized parts were cut, numbered and marked for specific house types and complete 'bundles' were then sent by rail to the various sites near railway stations around the North Island. The accompanying 'drawings' covered every facet of construction to aid the unskilled labourer. The pre-cut houses took 2-3 weeks to assemble. By the time the factory was closed in 1929 more than 1300 staff houses plus other railway buildings had been cut. The vast majority of these houses were built between 1924-27 and the first houses at Waihi were made in 1925 (Kellaway 1990).

There are seven railway houses in the Historic Area, of which four were prefabricated at the Frankton factory and moved to Waihi between 1925-1929. Although they have the same basic floor plan the factory made houses can be distinguished by their roof and porch design. The Waihi rail houses feature each of the four different basic roof and porch variations made at the factory. The other three houses include two platelayer's cottages and the station master's house. These are made to Public Works (NZR) designs and were all built by 1906. There were originally two other platelayer's cottages, one of which was on site when the line opened and the other was built in 1906. The first of these was moved to a site in Consol Street in Waihi in the 1970's; it is not known what happened to the other.

Station Master's House

The Station Master's house was built by Mr W.H Hay, who also built the station building. It was begun in April and finished in September 1904 at a cost of £496-10s-0d.

Single Working Men's Accommodation Huts

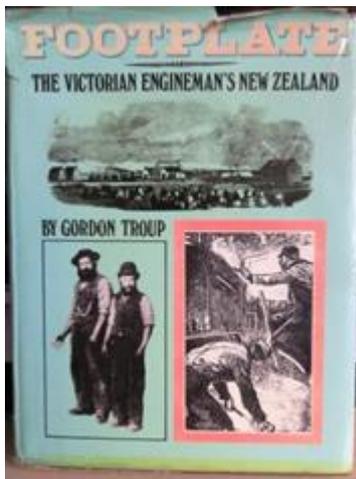
Men were employed in gangs to perform specific jobs on the railways, such as laying new tracks, constructing bridges or the maintenance of railway structures. Their accommodation was portable so that they could move from job to job and live on site. Prior to 1947 they were usually provided with '2 man' portable sleeping huts. From 1948 they generally lived in one man huts which were either converted from old two man huts, which had a semi-elliptical roof, or made to a new table roof plan. Huts were equipped with a stove, bed and cupboards. Sometimes a cook and a separate hut were provided for meals. When only two or three men were required on jobs (such as plumbing, fitting, bricklaying etc) obsolete coaches were fitted with living accommodation in one half and a mobile workshop in the other.

Book Reviews

Our library is available for your reading pleasure. As well as books on all variety of locomotives we have quite an extensive DVD collection on trains and railways around the world.

Footplate By Gordon Troup

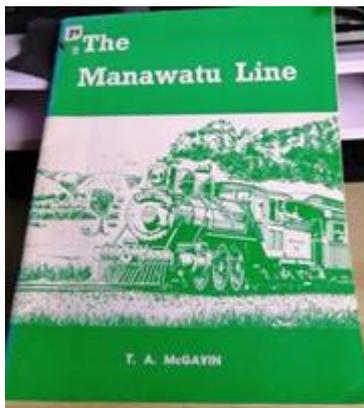
Published 1978



This is the saga of steam and steel in the new country. It begins in 1863, when New Zealand's tiny scattered settlements lay weeks apart in terms of travel time and when fortunately, the arts of railway-making were beginning to bear good fruit.

The young country's irregular surface posed tricky problems for the surveyors, engineers and the men who designed and drove the locomotives, but the boundless confidence and enthusiasm of the visionary Julius Vogel inspired the work; and by the end of Victoria's reign, New Zealand railways were approaching the zenith of their development.

This book tells the story. It is not a formal history, but a series of sketches and impressions of the trunks and branch lines, the tracks, the bridges and tunnels, and their rolling stock and above all of the men of the footplate in the golden age of the grand steam railways in our country.



The Manawatu Line by T.A McGavin

First published 1958, republished in 1982 by the NZ Railway and Locomotive Society.

The book was produced in a Commemoration of the Wellington & Manawatu Railway Company.

It was quite a railroad, the first General Manager was a Lambton Quay grocer, and the directorate included several merchants, a lawyer or two, a brewer, at least two retail drapers, and a pioneer settler whom Seddon once described as "The Father of Wellington. But these amateurs not only built a railway, they also ran it for 22 years, and ran it well.

This booklet is designed to recall the work of these men, to pay a measure of tribute to their enterprise and initiative. It will, it is hoped, form a useful record of many aspects of the Company's 84-mile railway until it was taken over by the Government Railway in December 1908.

Hilltop school visit 09/03/2023

Our train carried the 170 people spread over a full carriage consist.



I dropped into Waikino to see how things went and I can only say the Guard and his assistants did a fabulous job.

Driving the DBR's were Dean and Dave R. The double headed locos sound just glorious as they pulled out of Waikino.

Everyone on board had a smooth safe trip, being deposited back at Waikino to head off for further explorations of our Waihi's attractions.

