

Volume 20 Issue 2

May 2026

# PUKEMIRO JUNCTION

The Glen Afton Line

Two trains – both in steam!



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**Cover photo:** Two passenger trains, each under steam power (Phil K)

**Above:** Climax 1650, ready to depart Pukemiro Junction (Phil K)

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the second issue for 2026 – slowly catching up.

As we get into the cooler [damper] weather, steam locos can take over again at the junction. As the cover shows, we had our first simultaneous running of two passenger trains behind steam – I'm told that is the first time since May 1987 – a mere 39 years !

The next challenge is to complete remediation of the full running line to Glen Afton.

Thanks to all noted below for providing the content – mine are any inaccuracies.

Best regards,

John S – [secretary@bushtramwayclub.com](mailto:secretary@bushtramwayclub.com)

This newsletter was edited by John S – for the Bush Tramway Club

Thanks for contributions & assistance from  
Colin J, Phil K (freelance), Chris M, Florina B, Trevor W, Mike A, Guy C, Richard E, Bruce McL

# Colin's General Manager Report

Welcome to another BTC newsletter.

**Open days:** These were held on 1 February, 1 March, 5 April & 3 May.

During the open days we carried:

- February 217 adults, 38 school children & 40 pre schoolers
- March 84 adults, 39 school children & 19 preschoolers
- April 148 adults, 37 school children & 36 preschoolers
- May 163 adults, 39 children & 46 preschoolers



The Climax had been in steam in February, during both the open day (restricted to the Pukemiro yard), then with a group visiting from Puffing Billy railway (just east of Melbourne). Chris had got a lot of information from them during the overhaul of his Climax. They have a very similar Climax in size.

The weather for these open days was reasonable although we were undecided if we could use the Peckett loco for the April open day. However we had a lot of rain during the previous week & the early part of the open day week, so we decided to risk it, but we had the water wagon & fire fighting gear ready just in case. Thankfully they weren't needed (until May, as below).

We are pretty worried how the increasing price of fuels will affect our open day patronage.

May Open day turned out to be a very sunny day & we had quite a lot of passengers. They were treated to 2 steam trains – yes two steam locos on two separate trains. This was the first time since 1987 that we have had two of our steam locos on separate passenger trains.

The day was damped down by a couple of fires at the bottom end of the line. These were partly dealt to by our own fire crew plus a couple of engines from the Huntly brigade, their tanker plus tankers from Te Kauwhata & Ngaruawahia. Lucky the main fire was put out before it reached a plantation of pine trees. I have heard that Evan W didn't notice that there was a swamp close to the pine plantation!!

The trains for the day consisted of Climax 1650 with 2 carriages (with a diesel loco on the downhill end) as the 1st train, & the Peckett with mines carriage as the 2nd train.

The first train went up to the stop board at the slip, & then back down through the loop at Pukemiro & onto the bottom end of the line. The 2nd train left for the top end of our line once the 1st train had passed the Junction. The 2nd train then came back from the top end, into the loop at the Junction, & left for the bottom only once the 1st train was back at the Junction.



**Above:** May open day – the Climax train heading up into the Junction (Phil K)

This 2nd train hauled just by the Peckett was pushed up to the slip with the guard standing by the emergency brake, sighting at the top end of the train, then hauled by the Peckett to the bottom. It ran around the train with the loop, & then proceeded back to the station platform (re-positioning around the train again ready for the next trip).

The train from the bottom end always came into the station platform at the Junction so the passengers could get off & the next lot on. This was the way we had run many many years ago.

I'm told that the kitchen ran out of just about every thing that they had in stock. Thanks to all who turn up & help make these days a success.



**Above:** May open day – the Peckett train awaiting departure for the upper line (Phil K)

**Charters:**



We have a visit from the Federation of Rail Societies visiting us on Monday 1st June, for their annual conference which is partly being organized by Glenbrook Railway. They are coming for lunch, a good look around us & a ride on our railway.

This is the week before our June open day. They will be coming down from Pukekohe by Glenbrook Railways train, a quick visit to the new museum beside the railway station in Huntly & then out to BTC. Hopefully the Climax will be in steam!!

We will be providing a BBQ type lunch organized by Teresa & helpers. If you are free on that day, please come & lend a hand with the operating or lunch.

They will depart BTC at 2.30pm, some for Auckland airport & the others back to the hotel in Karaka by train to Pukekohe.

There is also early interest from another (public service) group looking for a good place for their pre-Christmas celebration later in the year. Who else might want to do that?

If you know of any group that may be interested in charters, please contact us.



**Above:** repairs by JD (Florina B)

## Around the Junction

Our 3 friendly goats have gone. Waikato District Council came & collected them. Again, a tremendous amount of work has been carried out around the railway since last newsletter.

Because of the rapidly rising cost of petrol & diesel, all members who come to the Junction **MUST** obey the following: Our fuel stores are to be kept locked at all times. If there is a group of members at the Junction, the last member to leave **MUST** ensure that All buildings are locked shut & the gate at the bottom of the driveway up to the Junction is locked closed. Dave M continues to keep our lawns mowed.

**Trees:** We still have a large amount of tree parts that need cutting up into usable lengths for light up wood for our steam locos. We have very little suitably sized wood to light the fires with. We use wood to get the fires going before we start burning coal. Any offers to come & cut some of this wood up?

**Road signs:** The sign at the bottom of our driveway up to the Junction was vandalised with graffiti to such an extent that we had to remove it. We are presently getting a new sign made out of fairly thin steel that will have the wording we want profile cut into it. This sign will be placed almost beside Rotowaro Rd at the entrance to our property.

There will also be a very large arrow put on the posts that the previous sign was attached to. This arrow will be pointing to our driveway.



*Above: temporary gate sign (Trevor W)*

**Internet & Phone Comms:** These have also been highly disrupted by vandalism this year – with 3 separate attacks (in 4 weeks alone in February!) on the telecoms cabinet next to the lower crossing on Hangapi Rd (major cuts to fibre & wiring bundles). A fourth attack in April saw the entire cabinet torched & destroyed, leaving Spark declining to continue providing us with traditional “POTs” service (over copper wires).



*Above: Total destruction of our phone/internet cabinets down at Hangapi Rd (JS)*

Nor is fibre available in a rural setting, so we're very lucky to have a few club members (thanks esp. to Rob H, his 4g-wireless colleagues at Spark, Trevor T, & Fraser R) who enabled us to plug into newly available rural 4g-wireless-mobile capability.

This is still in verification mode (less desirable options are Starlink or other Satellite comms), so we will need to see how it performs – note an unlimited rural data plan is NOT available at this time, but we should have enough data for our critical open day eftpos functionality.

## Track

Mike A has been unable to do much trackwork because of the lack of good screw spikes. All our tools for drilling holes in the sleepers also had problems, but were sorted out by Graeme C a few weekends ago. We hope to have a supply of new screw spikes soon.

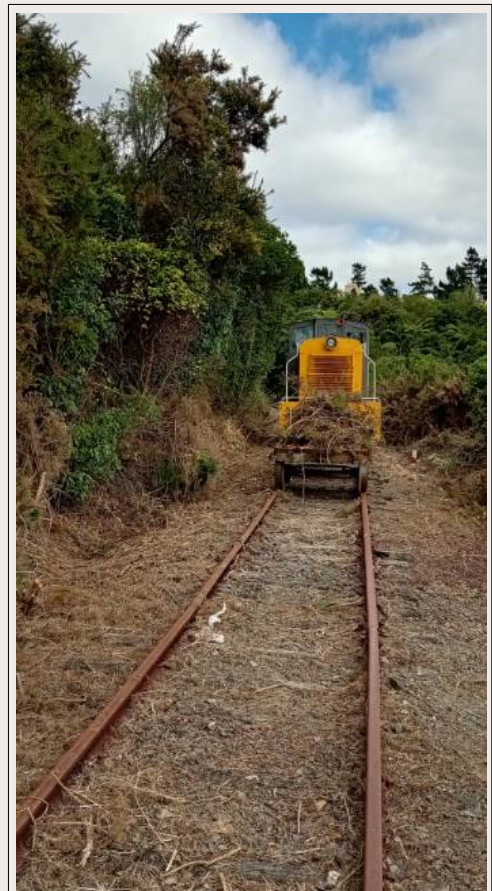
Mike, Dave M & a few others have been clearing a lot of lineside growth on the top of our line towards Glen Afton.

The completion of the repairs to the sandfill area has meant that we can now run our passenger trains another ½ kilometre up towards Glen Afton. This is the location of the slip brought down by Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023.

Cyclone Viana hit NZ on Saturday 11 April. Mike was at the Junction so on the Sunday he went up & down the line checking for any damage – there was none, apart from a small tree that had come down, & some rain water lying around.

A road side drain along Hangapipi Rd had blocked, & water was flowing down the road, onto our level crossing then down our railway, until it soaked through the ballast slightly further down.

Dave & Mike unblocked the roadside drain the next day, & cleared up the metal from the road that was on the railway lines.



**Above:** Heavy vegetation clearance up the line with Tr459 (Mike A)



**Above:** Tr459 clearance train up line (Mike A)



**Above:** re-gauging of points in lower yard (Mike A)

## Locos & Wagons

Scotty W & his son Tyler have been out, carrying out more annual checks on our diesel locos.

**Drewry 402:** While this loco was in use for track work, a pin hole developed on the radiator hose from the bottom of the radiator to the engine. This wasn't an easy job to get the hose off. During their annual inspection of this loco, they noticed that the belts that drive the air compressor were cracked. To replace these you need to take the radiator hose off that we had just taken off, so we got a new set of belts & a radiator hose, put every thing back together & 2 jobs were done!!

**Drewry 401:** During March, we noticed that the instrument panel lights didn't light up as soon as you turned the key on. This seemed to be a fault in the 12 volt system that supplies the power to the instrument lights.. Occasionally the lights would flicker on then go off again so we suspected a loose wire. Fraser R came & sorted the problem out.

**Price Tr459:** This loco had some new decal markings applied, courtesy of Guy C – looks great.



*Above: Tr459 sporting new decals in April (Guy C)*

**Peckett 1630:** This loco has passed its annual boiler inspections.

The loco was put in the workshop & jacked up so the faulty springs could be removed as well as the axle bearing. We had noticed that a couple of the main springs had a piece broken off the top leaf. All the top leaves have are bent into an eye with a slot in the center which the spring hanger fits into & a pin goes through the eyes to hold the hanger in place. When they had a good look under the loco, another spring was found to have the same problem.

The springs were taken to a spring maker in Rotorua. When the springs were returned, Mike A & Dave M got the springs back in place, but had to grind a little to get everything fitted into place.

Another job carried out was an axle bearing didn't seem to be getting as much oil to it as the rest so the bearing was taken out & a groove machined in the bearing surface to spread the oil better, The strange thing was that the bearing never ran even warm while the loco was in service.

A very large group of members helped Chris M put the loco back together after its open boiler inspection & the boiler was checked in steam by the boiler inspector. It was passed on 30/3/26.

**Climax 1650:** After steaming during February open day, this loco was briefly opened to pass its open inspection, was reassembled & passed its in steam test on 30/3/26.

A lot of work has been carried out on the new air system so carriage brakes can be worked by the loco driver – the first time that brakes of any sort have been fitted to the loco. A steam-driven 6” Westinghouse air compressor was found, fitted to the loco, & new pipework has been bent & fitted (Richard S bending the steel pipe & Fraser R bending the copper pipe). The new system was tested & running by the May open day.

**Planet Loco:** Michael & T (the CW person) emptied the radiator, flushed it out many times as a lot of very muddy water came out every time they flushed it. They pressurised the radiator with air, without leaks & the oil in the sump wasn't milky at all.



**Above:** The Planet is very useful & economical on works trains on the line (Mike A)

**No.3 Car (A1477):** Bruce McL, Mike A & Russell W have been continuing with work on this carriage since Richard E went back home. They have been making & fitting the wooden panels that fit above the windows just under the roof, & have completed the woodwork on the extended veranda at one end of the car. Trev T was also noticed doing some electrical work inside the carriage.



**Above:** A1477 showing works above windows & end verandah (Richard E)

**Track Wagon Xc554:** The roof of this wagon was very badly damaged when the large trees came down a few months ago at the top end of Pukemiro yard (as reported in issue 19-5, 2025). A heavy tarpaulin was fixed across the roof as temporary protection, due to lack of shed space.

**New Log bogies?:** We must not be keeping Bruce McL well enough occupied, as he has taken it upon himself to utilise some old steel log bogie frame components – just as they did in bush tramways, when the bogies' wood frames rotted. Should look good loaded up behind a geared loco?



**Post Script – For Sale: old half-rounds (ex sleepers) for landscapers....**

