

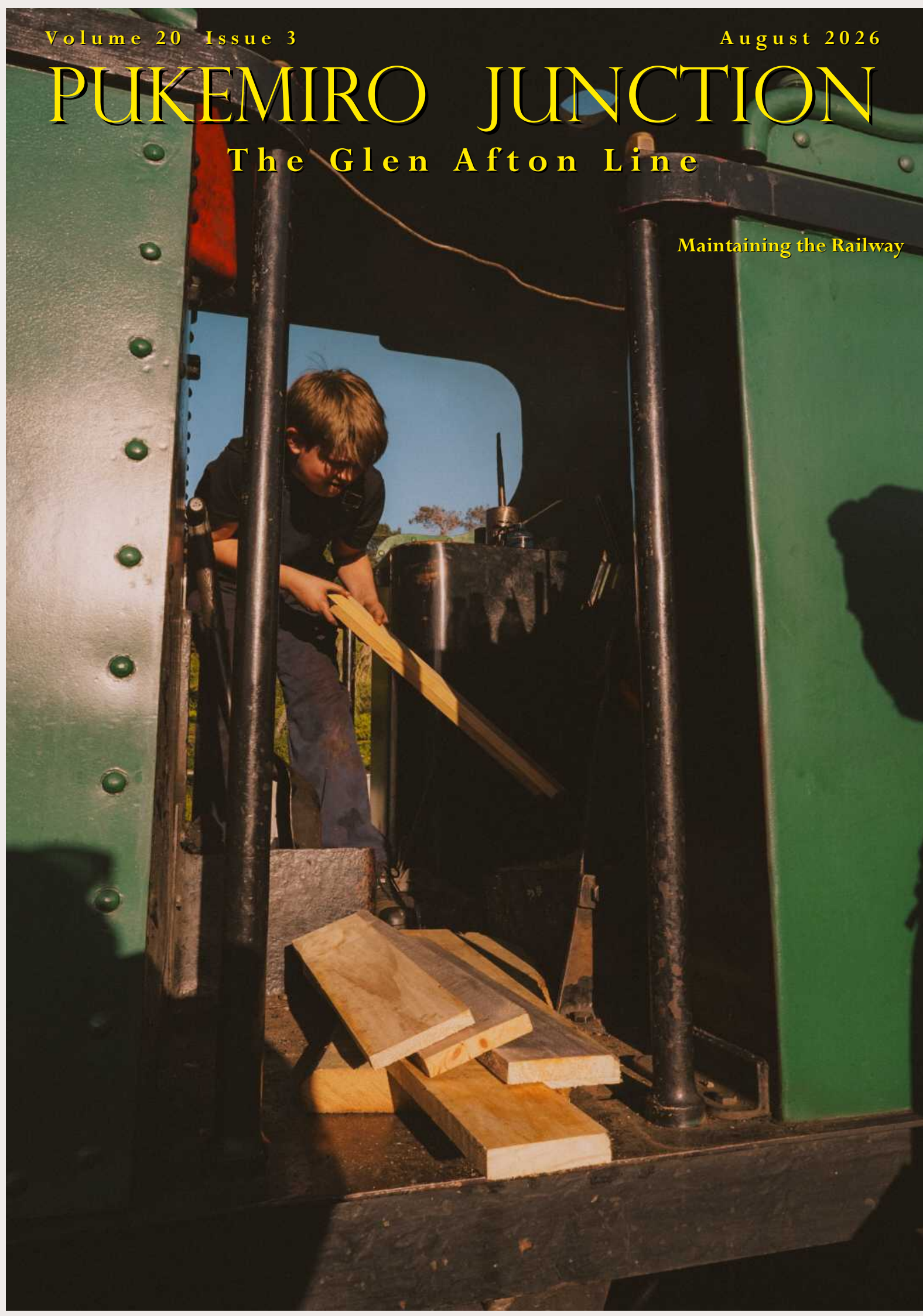
Volume 20 Issue 3

August 2026

PUKEMIRO JUNCTION

The Glen Afton Line

Maintaining the Railway



Contents

pg.3 – Colin's GM Report

pg.5 – Around the Junction

pg.8 – Track-side

pg.8 – Locos & Wagons

pg.10 – Gallery



Cover photo: Toby M preparing the Peckett for operation (Guy C)
Above: A "rustic" sleeper retrieved for a new life in a garden (Trevor W)

Editor's Note

Welcome to the third issue for 2026.

Quite a lot of focus & pics this time from the many smaller things that go on around the Junction, but without which there would be glaring gaps in what we do.

As ever, I'm always keen to hear of & receive pics in any format to assist us in preparation of the next issue. Thanks for the current ones.

Best regards,

John S – secretary@bushtramwayclub.com

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

Thanks for contributions & assistance from
Colin J, Guy C, Trevor W, Pete C, Alan S (Raglan Forge),
Trevor T, Jaidee B, Richard S, Bruce McL

Colin's General Manager Report

Welcome to another BTC newsletter.

Open days: These were held on 7 June & 5 July.

During the open days we carried:

- June: 168 adults, 51 school children & 48 preschoolers.
- July: 341 adults, 51 children & 96 preschoolers.



Above: More preparation behind the scenes for the open days (JS)

The reason for the very large increase in July was that they were mostly Chinese. Apparently someone had put an advert in Xiaohongshu/RED (a Chinese social media platform) for our railway & the open day. The kitchen sold out of everything & our souvenirs sold well.

Because the weather had been much wetter, we were able to use both our steam locos on the trains. In June only the Climax was used as one of our loco drivers was overseas.

Both steam locos were in use hauling the trains during the July open day. Both days had fine weather & it had been very dry a couple of days before but then we had had quite a lot of rain the day before.

We ran the train operations in the same way during the last open day.

Thanks to all who turn up & help make these days a success.



Above: July open day – a busy platform, awaiting departure (Pete C)

Charters:

We had a charter early in July for a Chinese group from East Auckland, most of whom don't speak much English.

The tour leader / bus driver started a small company to take them out to visit some attractions which they normally wouldn't be able to visit. These trips are within a reasonable distance of Auckland, otherwise they don't get the opportunity to get out & about. I've never seen so many pictures being taken by a group.

We have another charter booked soon, & another set for 2028 !!

Thanks – again – to all who turn up & help make these days a success.



Above: Evan should be lighting up the Peckett, not looking at his phone! (Guy C)

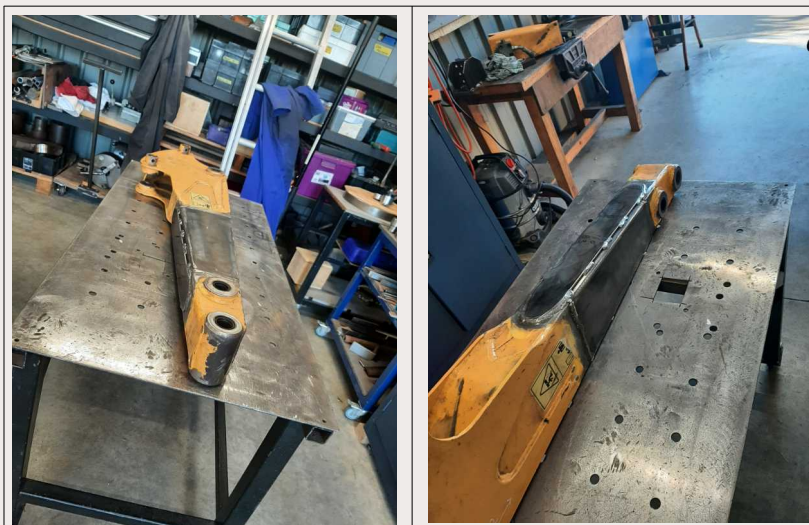
Around the Junction

So much has happened since last newsletter that I'm sure to have forgotten something!



Above: More hurried preparations for open day train operation (Guy C)

Small excavator: The damaged section of the boom had a new section welded in place (by Raglan Forge). It was fitted back on the digger by Richard S, Alun B & Evan W.



Above: The repaired boom (Alan S, Raglan Forge)

Tractor: The new ball joints in the steering were fitted by Richard S, so that is now working again too.

Road signage: The temporary one with the arrow on it has been fixed to the poles that the previous one was attached to.



We have the new ones cut out of sheet metal but haven't yet finalised a robust mount – from pieces of old rail or wood.



New BBQ: Following the demise of our overworked & ancient BBQ, we recently received a gracious donation of a new BBQ from **Bunnings Warehouse Hamilton South** (via their "Community Involvement Budget").

Our sincere thanks to Rizna Davahir & the team there for their prompt & generous response to our query.

New Coal Supply: We must also acknowledge the renewal of ongoing support from our neighbour, **Bathurst Coal (Rotowaro Mine)**, for a supply of coal at no cost.

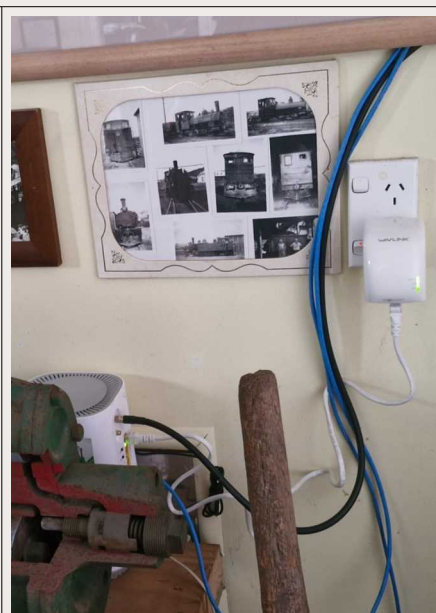
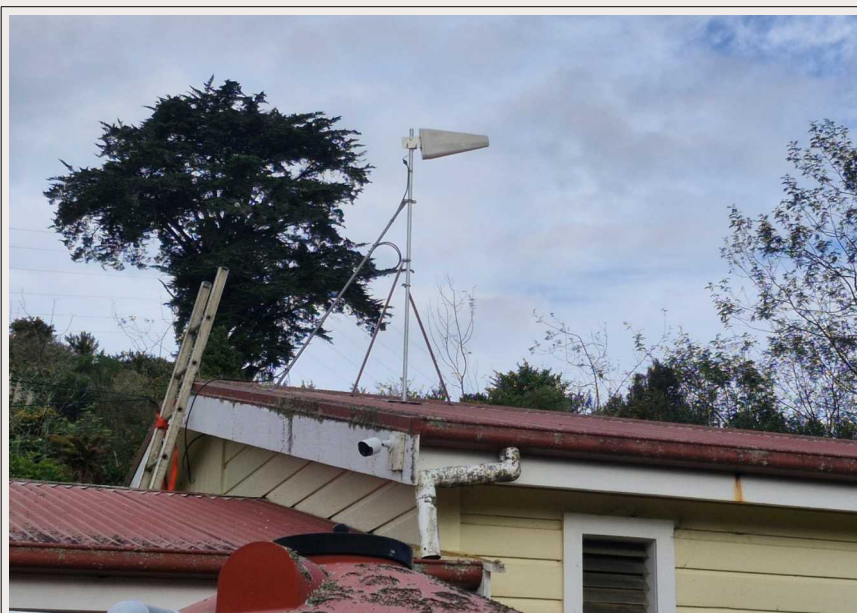


This is hugely important for the feasibility of our public open day steam train operations, which would otherwise be totally uneconomic.

We also acknowledge the equally generous provision of coal delivery at no cost by trucks from **Slater 2010 Ltd**, another good neighbour. Thanks to Bronwyn Slater & her team.



Internet & Phone Comms: Have been highly disrupted by vandalism this year (with the entire Telecoms cabinet torched & destroyed several months ago), we are now bedding in the new wireless 4g-mobile technology (hence the aerial on the station roof).



Above: The new modem & aerial for wireless internet+phone on station roof (Trevor T)

Station Building: Club members and visitors to Pukemiro will have noticed the new display of NZR steam locomotive number plates on the Pukemiro station interior wall.

The number plates are from the collection of Bob Shilton, one of the founding members of the Bush Tramway Club in the mid-1960s. Sadly, Bob passed away in early 2008.

A small, engraved notice explaining the significance of the plates is to be affixed to the wall below the plates.



Above: Bob Shilton's collection of plates, now mounted in the station (Richard S)

Ashley & his apprentice have also been quietly making the old kitchen in the station into a display area, so far with a lot of railway related bits & pieces in there.

Trees: Dave M & Ian B spent the best part of a day cutting some of the trees that either fell down or were cut down at the top end of the yard. There is still plenty to be cut up, so please come with your chain saws & get stuck in!!

Gardening: Are any members keen to keep our gardens in order?

We don't have very many, but they all need attention.



Above: Clearing debris Hangapi Rd (Guy C)

Track-side

We recently received 500 new screw spikes, & have also shunted out a flat-top wagon to store the 100 plastic sleepers that we had purchased. Both are fundamentally important for track maintenance & so, the upkeep & protection of our train operations.

To get this wagon out meant we had to shunt a large part of the siding where our vehicles that we store the ones that aren't used very often on.

With one of the Meremere diesel locos for shunting, we felt the loco give a lurch to one side. Stopping to have a look, we found a rail had collapsed, & closed this siding until the rail had been replaced.

When we took the old rail out, we found another section of the rail had also started to collapse as well.

Dave M, CJ & Alun B replaced the rail. We also had a Community Work crew recently replace a rail in the points just outside the shanty.

Now that we can run our trains over the sandfill, we are stopping just below the slip that was brought down by Cyclone Gabrielle (Feb 2023). We are still working to repair this, & can now run over 2.2km of track. All travel across the sandfill MUST be at very slow speed.



Above: Unloading sleepers (Jaidee B)

Locos & Wagons

Heisler Loco: The timber for the replacement headstocks (sitting in the wood work shop for a while now) was cut to length for the headstocks a couple of months ago. Richard S & Evan W then made steel bands at each end to stop timber cracking.



Above & Right: Heisler headstocks preparation: firstly careful cutting of the large yellow heart baulk, then drilling holes for mounts (with steel bands fitted) (JS)



Drilling of mounting holes are now nearly completed. They for large bolts that will attach them to the loco frame.



Above: Chris M starts preparation work on the the Heisler cab+tender (JS)

Planet Loco: We took the head off the engine to see why we were getting oil in the radiator. We took the head to a company in Hamilton to clean it up & then check it for cracks. It isn't cracked but were evaluating the cost of the rest of the work needed on it at present.

Graeme C has taken the sump off the loco, removed the pistons & crankshaft. The bearings of the piston rods need replacing & the engine seems to need new liners. All very expensive!

Tr217: This loco, also known as the pink panther, has been outside for many months. Richard S & Alun B got it running again, with the aim of getting it into good enough condition to be used for track work. There is still some work to carry out on the brakes.

No.3 Car (A1477): Bruce McL has continued to work on the woodwork that fits between the top of the windows & the roof. He has completed the other side.

Log bogies: Bruce McL has been quietly working at home making new log bogies to a sketch of the ones that were used on the tramway at Ongarue, where 3 of our bush locos came from.

One is at the Junction & the second one is very nearly completed as well.



Above: The log bogies: new timber with original steel fittings (Bruce McL, JS)

Gallery



Above: BB635 on train 278, undated – WW.Stewart collection (Richard S)



Above: Eric Burns, Dave Harris on F185, 1979 (Richard S)