

Volume 20 Issue 4

October 2026

PUKEMIRO JUNCTION

The Glen Afton Line

Recent Works

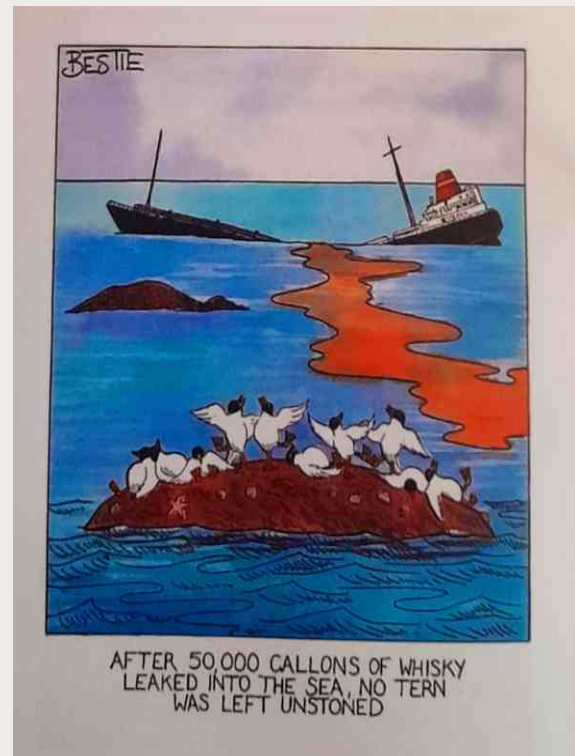


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Cover photo:

Evan W working on track replacement – a defect was found before Oct open day (Guy C)



Editor's Note

Welcome to the next issue for 2026 – still a little in catch-up mode.

More updates & pics from the many smaller & new things going on around the Junction.

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:

Words – Colin J

Pics – Guy C, Chris M, Ashley T, Jaidee B, Bruce McL, Richard S

Colin's General Manager Report

Welcome to another BTC newsletter.

Open days: These were held on 2-Aug, 6-Sep & 4-Oct.

During the open days we carried:

- August: 296 adults, 46 children & 60 preschoolers
- Sept: 184 adults, 57 children & 50 preschoolers
- October: 187 adults, 56 children & 47 preschoolers

We were very fortunate with the weather for the August & October open days as the country side was pretty dry, but with rain overnight & early mornings before, we could run our steam locos outside the yard. Two-train operations were again required to carry all the passengers.

We only had 1 steam loco driver for October so only the Climax & diesels were used.



Above: Evan W installs Peckett springs in a very confined space (GuyC)

Later in the day on the August & September open days, the Peckett had suspension issues & had to be towed back to the yard. As a result, we have had the 3 springs away getting checked & reset that weren't done earlier in the year.

The shop sold out of most of the goodies during the September open day. Our souvenirs also sold well.

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

NOTE (refresher course for the battery electric loco):

We are going to hold a refresher course for the battery electric loco on 22/11/26, in the morning & a safety course after lunch. The day will start at 10am.

Charters:

In early August we had a celebration day for people that had helped with the overhaul of the Climax loco. We carried 63 adults & 6 children.

Again we were very lucky with the weather as some rain had fallen the night before. The day went off very well & most of our visitors were very surprised with the gear that we have.

Thanks again to those who turned up to help.



Left: Union Foundry bush tractor sits over the end of pit (JS)

Right: Climax ashpan alteration (ChrisM)

Around the Junction

A fair bit has happened in recent months.

A newly obtained kitchen range hood was installed above the chip fryer, to better exhaust the oily fumes from inside the room (which makes a greasy mess on all surfaces).

The wireless internet was moved within the station for better building coverage.



Ashley & JD have spent more time adding to the display in the station. There are all sorts of railway items in this display now.

Work was also recently carried out on the tablet machines in the Station Masters office.

Dave M continues to keep our lawns cut – now that the weather is a bit warmer they need cutting more often.

Vegetation: Ian B & Dave M have spent a lot of time cutting up parts of the trees that either fell or were cut down last year. We now have a large pile of rings waiting to be split up in firewood for use in our steam locos. There are still heaps of these parts to be cut up.

A few weekends ago, Andrew T came out with his log splitter & got stuck in splitting the rings. He was assisted by Dave M. All the split pieces have been stacked in our Lc wagon. There are still a lot of rings to be split.

Dave M & CJ spent ½ a day trying out a new spray that is supposed to kill woolly night shade. It also kills gorse. We sprayed 200 litres onto one side of the line from the station up to the slip.

We mixed up another 200 litres but the wind came up & we couldn't spray. Dave M sprayed it the next day plus a lot of weed spray as well. These weeds are really growing with the finer & hotter weather.

Sheds: Ashley organised the purchase of 4 sheds from KiwiRail in Frankton. 3 were delivered a few weeks ago & are placed near where the old hall was, but up against the bank.

Ashley & JD spent some time making shelves for 2 of these sheds.

They & Dave M spent part of a day shifting some of the bits & pieces that had come down from Ian J's warehouse some time ago, to the area where the old hall sat.



One of these sheds contains parts for the 5-axle truck that runs on rails that Ian J was preparing. We were recently contacted by a bloke in Auckland that Ian had got to overhaul the motor for this vehicle & he still had the gear box for it!

Trevor W has collected these up & they are now in the shed with the rest of the bits & pieces for this vehicle.

Ian had obtained this vehicle from Mamaku many years ago.

GM grumbles: If you empty a gas bottle, ***please let me know*** or put a note on the board in the shanty.

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we urgently had to replace our oxygen bottles, as both were found to be empty when Fraser R went to blow bolt holes in the rail for the fishplate bolts. I had been told that one was getting well down but I didn't know that the other one was empty as well. Guy C had to make a special trip into Huntly to swap them only to find that the place where we took them had moved.

I also recently found that one of the LPG bottles was empty so I swapped it & when I put it in the store with the rest, found another one empty.

I also note that a lot of trips up & down the line are not being recorded in the train running book in the shanty. Its no good aiming to do this paperwork next time you are out at the Junction because all most certainly you will have forgotten! This is required by our train operating "Safety System".

Defibrillator: St Johns have donated us one of these, which was presented to us during the October open day.

The idea came thanks to Richard C who contacted St Johns in Huntly to see if they could supply one. They very generously donated one on the basis that they maintain it as well.

This is the type of machine that you wish you never have to use but occasionally, you need to. It will be mounted on the end wall of the station.

To open the box, you need to phone 111 ask for St Johns & then give them the location of the box.

They then provide the magic number needed for the combination lock on the box. The secret number never changes!



Above: St Johns new defibrillator unit (GuyC)

Track-side

We had a community work crew out recently & they spent the day replacing sleepers under the carriage siding. There still remains a couple of days work to complete this job.

We are using second hand square & half round sleepers for this job. These have been swapped in the main line at some stage but are good enough for a siding.

One day before the October open we found that a rail on the main line needed replacing. It was cut to length by Dave M & the fish plate holes were blown in the webs by Fraser R.

Others who helped were Pete C, Vinnie N, Guy C & others..



Above: Bright algal patina on metal trackside in the lower end of the yard (JS)

Locos & Wagons

Meremere Loco 401: The air compressor in this loco developed a bad knock, which was traced to the bottom end of one of the sections.

Richard S & Fraser R changed the compressor for our spare one & took the opportunity to swap the heads that we had very recently had overhauled on to the compressor that had been fitted to 401. That leaves the compressor with the knock to be overhauled, including the heads.

Peckett Loco: This loco has spent the last month or so in the workshop jacked up & sitting on blocks. We had found problems with 3 of the springs, so we had them taken to Archers in Rotorua for repair, overhaul. We now have all springs reset to the same measurements.

To check the springs, they are completely pulled apart & each leaf heated & set. They are then put back together & have a buckle put around all the leaves of each spring. & a pin or bolt goes through them all at the centre. Archers found that the buckles were pretty worn so they were repaired as well. The loco was test run on the day before our October open day & didn't give any problems but wasn't used. A large number of our members have helped with this job.

Heisler Loco: A recent working-bee has fitted the new headstocks onto each end of the loco, thanks to Richard S, Clive D, Fraser R, Alan U, JS, & others.

Chris M has started cleaning & stripping the old sections of the cab sides of this loco, & cleaning the frame work part of the cab that can be reused.

Further working-bees are planned in the very near future. Fraser R is arranging for drawings of the various parts of the steel work needed for the cab in order to get quotes for purchase of steel.



Above: A big Heisler work weekend recently – headstocks, cylinders, cab measure, etc. (JS)

Planet Loco: Work continues on the engine for this loco. Trevor W has recently returned from a holiday in UK, bringing some parts for the engine as part of his luggage!

The head of the engine was taken to an engine reconditioner in Hamilton so it could be looked at & a quote given to us. We have just heard that the work that needed to be done to complete the head job has been carried out!!

Graeme C has spent a couple of days dismantling the engine & now has one of the cylinder liners out. He has obtained a set of crank shaft bearings.



Above: Planet engine reco work progressing on the same weekend recently (JS)

Log bogies: Bruce McL has now completed the building of these. He has made & fitted a wooden brake block & the operating gear for this. He has now completed the bolsters that fit on top of the bogie itself & that the log sits on & is chained to this bolster. These bolsters swivel as the bogie goes around corners.



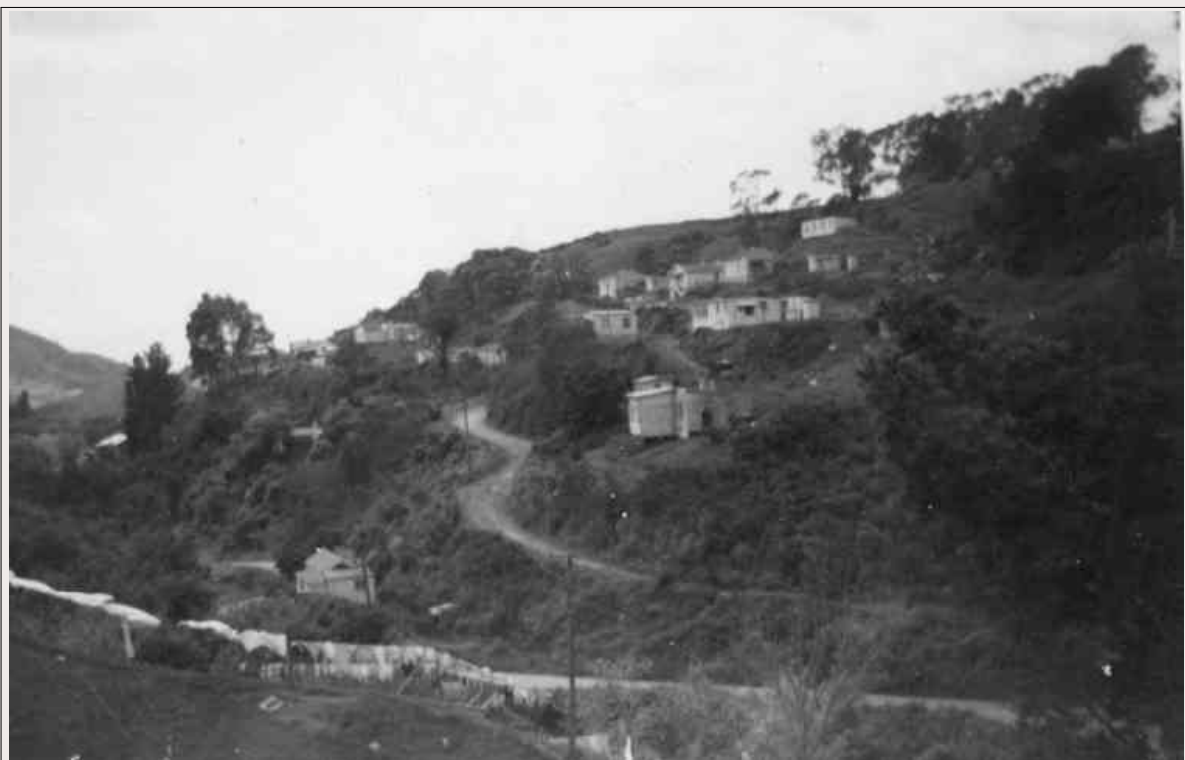
Above: Completed log bogies, complete with hand-operated brake (Bruce McL)

Gallery



D Cross photo

Above: Bb147 on train 271, 29-Aug 1957 – looking up the line, this now to the large embankment & road crossing to the GRB clean fill dump (ex mine) (D.Cross, scanned Richard S)



Above: Early eastward view up to Pukemiro Junction, showing the large number of surrounding houses, undated (M. Walker, via Bruce McL, Richard S)



Left: Pukemiro Junction view up past old club station shed



Right: Junction viewed toward the SE from ridge-top high across the valley, undated (M. Walker, via Bruce McL, Richard S)



Above: 1955 Whites Aviation aerial view of Junction, similar to above but towards the SSW – both pics have a rake of coal wagons in the station ([NZ Nat.Lib., ref. WA-38768-F](#))