



Newsletter

January 2023

Excursions

Our first two Christmas/New Year public excursions (27th & 28th December 2022) were fully booked which was great news for us. Following these two excursions, GCVR maintenance volunteers worked on Friday 30th December to empty the boiler and clean out both the fire-box and smoke-box of Wa165, then again on Sunday 1st January (what holiday?) to refill and heat the boiler water up for the 9:00 am departure of the cruise ship Silver Muse charter on Monday 2nd January. We carried 110 out of the maximum of 596 passengers that the ship can carry and there were some very avid steam train enthusiasts among them! Our 3rd public excursion for this period ran that same afternoon (a very busy day) with the 4th public excursion running the next day - 3rd January. Both of those public excursions were also fully booked.



Guy Needham

Guy Needham, working for the NZ Herald, was on board on 3rd January, to take photos and prepare for an article on things to do in Gisborne.

10 days later, the cruise ship Le Laperouse berthed at Eastland Port Wharf 8. The passengers were taken by bus directly from the ship's gangway to the train boarding area in front of the Senator Motor Inn for their trip out to Muriwai.

The Muriwai School was back in action with their Kapa Haka (1) – their first one for this year, with many of their Whanau also present. An excellent turn-out remembering that it was still the school holidays and also a Saturday. Their efforts were certainly appreciated by the cruise ship passengers.

On arrival back in Gisborne, the passengers were taken from the train directly back to the ship as the ship was due to leave at 12:30pm, after having arrived at 7:00am that morning – a very short visit to Gisborne.

(1) For our international readers, a Kapa Haka is traditional Māori action songs performed by a group standing in rows. Very popular with our cruise ship passengers. The money earned from these performances enables the 30 pupil school to purchase items for their pupils that they would not otherwise be able to afford.

One of the cruise ship Expedition Guides informed us that the West Coast coal that we use is probably the best quality coal in Australasia and is **only** around 50 million years old (does that mean that it is too young to smoke?).

A very busy start to the year with another 3 cruise ship charters (2 on the same day) and 1 more public excursion scheduled during January.

The latest details of our planned excursions are available on our website at www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/ .

Workshop Catch-up

With the number of excursions during December and January, the maintenance volunteers have been very busy with the routine work required to prepare and service Wa165 and the train. This has left a minimal amount of spare time to carry out any other work.

Off-Site Work *Bridge Pile Clamps*

Following on from the last newsletter, it is easy to see why the clamps on the Customhouse Street bridge need to be installed at low tide!



Track Inspections.

Normally track inspections are only carried out on the days that the train is running. However, after the departure of ex-cyclone Hale, a track inspection was carried out on Friday 13th January - the day prior to the train running. This inspection was to check for any problems caused by the storm.

Joe & Graham had also been out on Wednesday 11th January (3 days before the scheduled excursion) to check on the Waiapoa rail bridge – apparently the river flow was very swift and they could feel the bridge vibrating with the force of the water. No damage was apparent.

Snippets

It was good to see Nick back in Gisborne, on holiday from his job with RocketLab – he is now based in Virginia, USA. Unfortunately he did not get the chance to fire Wa165 (he is a qualified fireman), but made a very nice job of driving Wa165 during the run-around at Muriwai and coupling it back up to the train – almost as though he had never been away!

On Thursday 12th January, two separate groups of visitors arrived at the workshop – they had seen on the website that the workshop is open for visits Thursday and Saturday mornings. A family of four with a “mad-keen” train son with an older “supportive” brother arrived, followed about three minutes later by a couple who both drive suburban trains in Auckland. The family were also from Auckland and the two groups did not know each other. It is not often that we have two groups of visitors at the same time!

The “Media” section of the website has been updated with the recent articles about the condition and use of the bridge over the Turanganui River to the port.

Fund Raising

Any ideas to Sally please, no matter how off-beat they may seem!

That’s it for this newsletter!

If you have anything to put in the next newsletter, please let me know. Any ideas welcome.
Send emails to gcvr.newsletter@gmail.com

Graeme Scott

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