



# Newsletter

## February 2023

### Excursions

Late January and early February were very busy. On 24<sup>th</sup> January the cruise ship *Europa* provided us with 113 passengers out of the 516 on board.

We had 2 cruise ship excursions on 28<sup>th</sup> January – the *Regatta* in the morning (120 passengers) and the *Noordam* in the afternoon (145 passengers). A 6am start to get the train ready, after some of the maintenance volunteers had warmed up the locomotive boiler the day before. The rain held off for the morning trip, but arrived just in time for the afternoon arrival at Muriwai. The Muriwai Primary School Kapa Haka group boarded the train to get out of the rain (only a handful of passengers got off) and sang three songs in each carriage, which was appreciated by the passengers. The *Noordam* had just come from Auckland, so the passengers knew all about the weather conditions and disastrous flooding that had happened in the North Island courtesy of Cyclone Hale. (At that stage, Cyclone Gabrielle did not exist, so we did not know what was going to happen on 13<sup>th</sup> February when that cyclone arrived!)



*The Noordam (left) and the Regatta (right). (I must get a better camera!)*

The public excursion on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January followed on from the last 4 public excursions in that it was also fully booked - 166 passengers, which included a lot of young children.

Due to the forecast arrival of another “atmospheric river” (no, not Cyclone Gabrielle), the *Regatta* (which had been in Gisborne on 28<sup>th</sup> January) asked on 30<sup>th</sup> January if there would be any chance of having another train charter on 1<sup>st</sup> February, if it could not get to the Bay of Islands on 31<sup>st</sup> January due to the weather. Unfortunately due to the short notice and for various other reasons, it was decided that the extra charter would not be possible. In the end, the *Regatta* after a short visit to the Bay of Islands, did come back to Gisborne for 1<sup>st</sup> February, but the weather was not great for a train trip that day anyway.



*One of the buses used to carry cruise ship passengers from the port to the waiting train. Normally 3 or 4 buses are used.*

Waitangi Weekend also had 3 excursions, but they were spread over 3 days. Saturday was the cruise ship *Zuiderdam* which had a 9am departure; Sunday was a public excursion at the normal time of 1pm and Monday was a 9am departure for the cruise ship *Silver Whisper*.

Both of the cruise ship excursions went well. The public excursion was only about 60% full (the previous 5 had all been full), but the passengers enjoyed the trip which was the main thing.

Of course, we did not know that Waitangi Weekend was to be the last of our cruise ship charters for this operating season. The aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle and the National State of Emergency meant that the rest of the cruise ship visits to Gisborne were cancelled. The last cruise ship charter was to have been on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

A conference due to be held in Gisborne early in March has been postponed due to an accommodation shortage, which means that the steam train charter that they had booked has also been postponed.

The next public excursions are scheduled for Easter.

The latest details of our planned public excursions are available on our website at [www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/](http://www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/) .

# Workshop Catch-up

## *Wa165 Maintenance*

Apart from the usual maintenance work required to keep the steam locomotive running during the operating season, a major piece of work has been the repair of a small leak from the packing around the regulator.



As you can see, this has required the removal of the boiler sight glasses to gain access. Not an easy job.

## *On-Site Work*

### Coal.



35 tonnes of it (well 34.88 tonnes actually) arrived from Greymouth on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January. Carried by “Bulk Lines”, the driver comes from Napier.

He was supposed to be a frequent visitor to Gisborne during February, as he was scheduled to spend the whole month hauling beetroot from Christchurch to Gisborne for Cedenco. That was the plan before Cyclone Gabrielle cut Gisborne off from the rest of the world!

This amount of coal (probably enough for around 70 excursions, depending on the skill of the fireman) filled and over-flowed our outside coal bin.



The next day, Trevor Jukes drove his large fork-lift around to the workshop and used it to move the “coal storage” container into it’s final position. This container does not have a roof, so after Graham had put a new floor into it some months ago, John Smith had welded some pipes to the top of the walls to stop them splaying out. The doors to the container had been locked recently after it was discovered that someone had started living inside it, despite it not having a roof!

Once the container had been moved into position, Trevor then drove his large loader to the workshop and in a very short time had filled the container with 17 tonnes of the coal (according to the weighing machine on his loader). Thanks to him for doing both of these jobs.



On the same morning, Trevor moved the container which normally has the jiggers stored in it to place it alongside the hi-rail shed. The idea behind that is that the jiggers will be closer to the tracks once they leave the workshop.

## *Off-Site Work*

### *Bridge Pile Clamps.*



Most of the clamps have now been fitted to the Customhouse Street bridge (shown at low tide!).

We are waiting for one more set to arrive.

### More Bridges & Water

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February, along came Cyclone Gabrielle. Around 9 inches of water in 24 hours with gale force winds. Huge amount of flooding, roads cut and crops destroyed throughout this region and other parts of the North Island.

Bridge 289 (between the Waiapoa River bridge and Browns Beach Rd) crosses over a small stream. An inspection 3 days after the cyclone revealed apples caught in the bridge structure and that the water flowing in the “small stream” had been up over the rails on the bridge. The bridge will be water-blasted to remove the remaining silt.

Bridge 290, the Waiapoa River bridge only had some wood debris around the central pier, but the “high tide” mark along the river where the water level had reached, was marked by tomatoes which had been washed off surrounding fields.

Since then an inspection of all the bridges has been carried out by John Wells.

## What???



An unwelcome visitor arrived on the track at Lytton Road on 31<sup>st</sup> January.

It had apparently been stolen and was being chased by the police.

Fortunately there was no damage to the track.



Since then another vehicle was spotted on the tracks at about 1:30am in the morning in the same area. (Yes, I had just finished work – bus drivers work strange hours at times!)

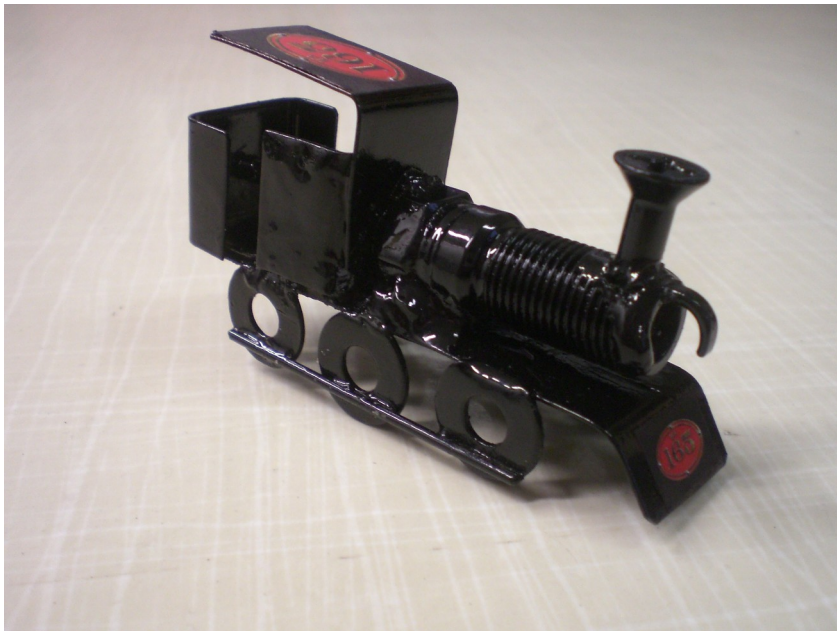
As that vehicle was reversed off the tracks and headed down the road without any lights on, it is up to you to decide what the condition of the driver was!

# Snippets

Within a period of 1 week, we had 2 groups of visitors to the workshop who wanted to make donations, but did not have any cash on them. Of course, there was nobody around who knew how to operate the EFT-POS machine! There are now bank account slips hanging on the wall by the donation box, so anybody wanting to make a cash-less donation can take one of those slips away with them.

The carriage seat plans on the website have been updated to show which direction(s) each seat faces. These are at the bottom of the Timetable page - [www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/](http://www.gcvr.org.nz/bookings/).

According to the latest New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA) magazine, "due to unforeseen circumstances and cost-prohibitive development requirements", the NZMCA camp-ground at Gisborne Railway Station will not be going ahead. The idea was for the NZMCA to lease land from KiwiRail to develop new camp-grounds, with the net revenue being directed to the Kea Conservation Trust to support their Kea Recovery Programme. They have also scrapped the proposed National Park one, but are looking to develop camp-grounds in other locations owned by KiwiRail.



Based on past models created by the late Dave Smith, Mike Scandlyn has been making metal models of Wa165.

The model is centered around a spark-plug – this represents the boiler of the steam engine.

Other parts include washers, screws and flat pieces of metal.

After the component parts have been prepared, final assembly takes about ¾ hour.

# Fund Raising

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

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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](mailto:gcvr.newsletter@gmail.com)

Graeme Scott

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