

Mainline Steam News

Newsletter of the Mainline Steam Trust

December 2008



Auckland

Wellington

Christchurch

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Cover:

TOP: Ka942 and Ja1271 put on an impressive show as they roar up the Owhango Bank south of Taumarunui as part of the Main Trunk Celebrations on the 25th October 2008.

BOTTOM: J1211 is getting ready for a photo run at Eskdale on the Napier to Gisborne line during our 2008 steam tour. 21st October 2008.

Both photographs by Michael Tolich.

Making Submissions for the Newsletter.

Photographs: Photographs can be submitted by email to

michael@mainlinesteam.co.nz

Please ensure that you include a description with each photo and your name so that we can credit you.

Text: Stories and news of rail interest can be submitted in Word format above address. Please ensure that they are your original work and include your name and contact details.

From the Editor.

It's hard to believe 2008 is drawing to a close. It has been a busy and exciting year for Mainline Steam as we ran some trips we haven't run in some time like; The Main Trunk Trekker, Sunday Lunch and Fieldays. Of course there was also the old favourites like the Arthurs Pass excursions and the Midland Mountaineer. All of which sold out in short order. There was also something new when we ran the Christchurch Shuttles as part of the Land Transport's Level Crossing Safety Week. All the trips were successful this year and showed a growing interest in Mainline Steam. The of course we finished off the year with our New Zealand

Steam Tour which brought in people from Switzerland, Australia, Great Britain, Germany and the USA.

Unfortunately there were some trips we couldn't run this year for a variety of reasons. The Daffodil train being one due to the lack of affordable carriages in the Wellington area. Also we cannot, currently, operate from Auckland to the north because the new curve which connects the Main Trunk to the northern line is too sharp for a J class to negotiate. We understand that when the second connection, from the south, is installed we will be back in business.



With the current world financial crises 2009 looks as though it will be a, even more, challenging year for Mainline Steam than usual. However, we intend to battle on as we know that we have the support of our members. That support is very important and appreciated.

I hope you all have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Michael Tolich.

Parnell News

Ja1275 – In perpetration for the Tour Train and Labour Weekend a few minor leaks were attended to and the lubricator drive swapped out for our spare. Unfortunately the spare drive proved even more unreliable than the unit it replaced, we have now ordered two commercial freewheel clutches to replace the original units which should make the lubricator drive much more reliable.

Also receiving attention has been the whistle valve, a new spindle was made and fitted prior to the tour but didn't cure the leakage 100%, since returning home we have located a number of small cracks in the body of the whistle valve which we are currently trying to repair.

Ba552 – Nothing new to report, since completion of its annual boiler survey the loco has only being steam twice.

Bb144 – Big news for this period is that the Bb is now back on its wheels, completion of fitting the new axle box liners and truing up the crown brasses allowed the axle boxes, wheel sets and spring gear to be refitted to the frames. The reconditioned brake gear and side rods can now refitted which should complete work on the frames. Attention will now revert back to the boiler.



Bb144

Ja1240 – Both main reservoirs have had the ends cut out to clean the inside of the reservoir and check for rust, both have now had their ends welded back in and pressure tested. The piston rods have recently been ground true and checked for cracks. The cross compound compressor is currently being overhauled, one cylinder required boring to true it up and a new piston and rod made for that cylinder. Both the compressors piston rods are being metal sprayed and ground true ready for refitting. New valves are currently being machined and the compressor should be reassembled shortly. A number of the boiler fittings and appliances are currently under overhaul with the exhaust injector and lubricator underway at present.

Fm1254 – This long term resident at Parnell has finally moved on to its new home, for some years its owner John Bovis has been keen to move his van to Wellington. The opportunity finally arose last October when we were able to take the van south with the empty service for the Tour Train, only minor brake adjustments and a through inspection were required before the van was cleared to travel.

Bagnall – The annual boiler survey was completed just prior to the loco taking part in another Thomas day at Glenbrook. While opened up for its survey the regulator was dismantled and some modifications made to try and cure the problem with it being difficult to open past halfway. The shuttle valve on the regulator also received some attention. It is proposed to return the loco to Parnell early next year.

Depot – The first *Kinki* passenger car bogie is currently in the workshop and stripped down for overhaul. In conjunction with the overhaul of this first bogie an overhaul and maintenance procedure is being developed for the preceding bogies.



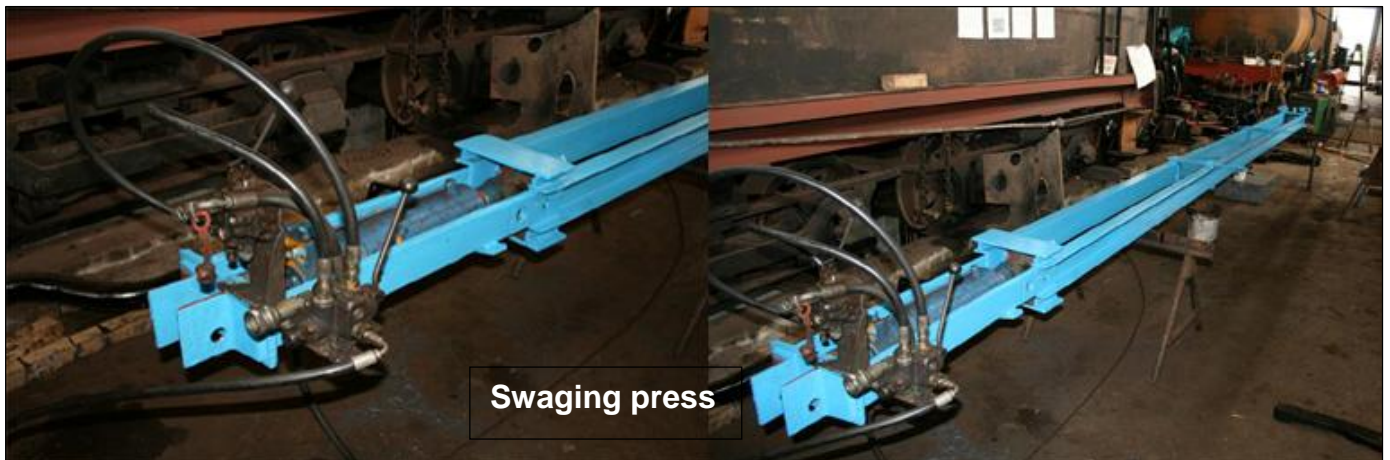
Metro Water have been frequent visitors to our site recently after a neighboring construction site managed to pour a large quantity of concrete into one of the sewer lines blocking it and causing an back up of sewage. They are currently using portable pumps to pump around the blockage which is 25m underground while a method to repair the lines is formulated.

Auckland City Councils new graffiti policies have not resulted in a let up on the graffiti at Parnell and twice recently

we have been hit heavily with ladders being used to get further up the walls, we are also still having to turn away a number of scrap dealers, one of whom managed to remove the air con units for at least four unoccupied apartments locally before being caught.

Please if you see anything that doesn't look right let us know or do something about it.

A new hydraulic **swaging press** has been completed ready to swage the small ends on the boiler flues for Ja1240.



New Zealand Steam Tour 2008.

This year the tour was scheduled to start in Christchurch and finish in Auckland. However, we had a request from an American agent for his group to start and finish in Auckland so I left Auckland with this group on the 10th aboard the Overlander. This was an enjoyable trip until we got to Palmerston North where we were offloaded onto buses because of derailment ahead of us. Anyway we made Wellington in time for dinner and the next day enjoyed a calm trip across to Picton on the Interislander and down to Christchurch on the Tranz Coastal to join the main tour.

The evening before the start of the tour is always interesting as you suddenly have a lot of different nationalities together and it is a chance for everyone to see who they will be spending the next couple of weeks with. A lot of our customers have been on rail tours overseas and they are often pleasantly surprised to meet someone from one of those tours. On this tour we also had a number of people back for their second tour with us and it was great to catch up with them.

The first morning of the tour is always full on as everyone is excited with the tour getting under way and luggage and people are loaded onto buses for transfer to the train. It also gives me a chance to see how much luggage we are going to have to deal with each day. On this tour there were almost 200 bags of varying sizes. On average they are handled 4 times a day. (Hotel to bus. Bus to train. Train to bus. Bus to hotel.)



Jb1236 southbound with the tour train on day one.

Arrival at the station also generates a fair bit of excitement as the passengers get their first look at the train and most importantly the motive power. With this tour starting in Christchurch Jb1236 was first out of the blocks and our Christchurch crew had done their usual stunning job of turning out the locomotive in pristine condition. Unfortunately as the locomotive and train were being

transferred back to Christchurch from Dunedin one of the cylinders was damaged and the locomotive was out of service for the rest of the tour in the South Island. Fortunately the main body of the tour was away in Queenstown and was rejoining the tour in Christchurch. 1236 limped home on one cylinder.

KiwiRail provided diesel power for the rest of the South Island legs and I would like to thank them for providing clean locomotives. On the leg from Christchurch to Picton a newly painted KiwiRail Dx led the train.

Once in the North Island the tour was back behind steam for the trip to Gisborne and back to Feilding for the Centennial celebrations with J1211 in charge of the train and then back to Auckland behind Ja1275.

A couple of interesting moments occurred while operating over the line to Gisborne. On the way back I was riding in the cab and as we went under a road over bridge something dropped through the cab roof hatch and hit me square in the chest. I looked down and realised that it was a large chunk of beehive that had been blasted off the bottom of the bridge by the exhaust from the locomotive and, in a one in a million chance, had dropped through the partially open hatch. The result being that I was covered from my neck to my knees in a solid mass of bees who were probably as surprised as I was. The cab was also rapidly filling with bees, so the driver made a rapid brake application and as soon as we stopped I bailed out, carefully as I could feel the bees starting to crawl down the neck of my shirt, while the fireman got the injector hose going to spray out the cab. I, cautiously, unzipped my safety vest and shook all the bees off that before getting someone to brush the remaining bees off me. I only got three stings which wasn't bad. The most unfortunate thing of the whole episode, in my mind, is that no one captured it on film.

The other, slightly surreal moment, was when we had descended through the Manawatu Gorge and came up to the junction of the Main Trunk just north of Palmerston North. We were held there waiting for a northbound Ja1271 which was heading Steam Incorporated's train to Feilding. How long is it, I wonder since two steam hauled passenger trains had crossed there. Then we arrived at

the platform to find F163 about to depart with its train for Woodville. All these steam trains and the Feilding event hadn't even got under way fully.

Feilding put on a great event over the next few days with thousands turning out to see all the action and ride the trains. All our passengers really enjoyed the event as they did the whole tour. Below are a number of photos from the tour and from the Feilding Centennial celebrations.



The D class at Pleasant Point Railway during our tour groups visit.



Stand in steam loco Dx5212 leads our train over Patersons Creek viaduct on the way to Arthurs Pass.



Weka Pass A428 puts on a fine show during two of the Photostops when we visited.

Daniel Garland

KiwiRail Dx5143 leads our train north over the Okarahia Viaduct. Daniel Garland photo.



J1211 at the Holts Forest photo run.



On the way back from Gisborne we got permission to stop on the airport runway for a photo opportunity. Our passengers had to admit that it was certainly unique.

Our arrival in Feilding brought to four the number of steam locomotives we provided for the event. J1211, Ab663, Ja1275 and Ka942. We also provided Ew1805 which was on static display and looking fantastic with its new paint job. (Below)





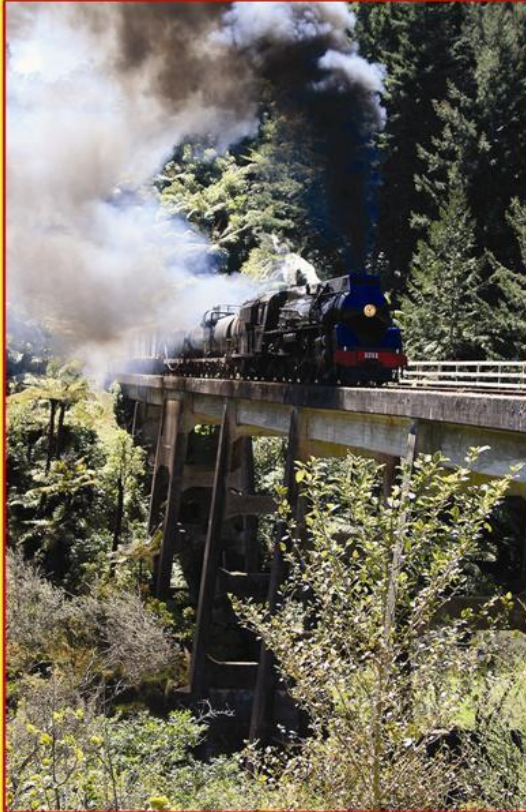
Left to Right: Ka942, Ab663 & J1211 pose for photos during the Feilding event. Georg Trub photo.



Ab663 leads an excursion through the Manawatu Gorge to Woodville.

Mainline Steam New Zealand Steam Tour

October 12th to 30th 2009



Travel through the stunning New Zealand landscape behind a variety of beautifully restored steam locomotives. Sit back and relax in comfortable carriages as the real New Zealand reveals itself. You can be assured when we say steam tour we mean **STEAM** Tour. Our train operates on the mainline behind up to 5 different steam locomotives.

What can you expect?

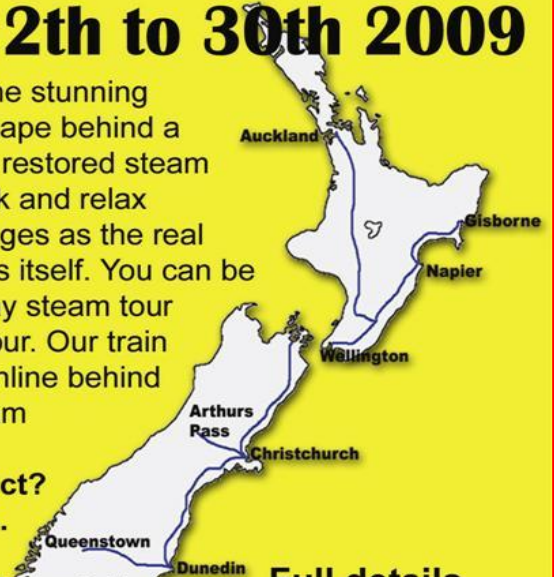
Photo runbys? Yes.

Cab rides? Yes.

Excellent Accommodation? Yes.

Comfortable carriages? Yes.

Off train sightseeing? Yes.



Full details can be found on our website.

www.mainlinesteam.co.nz

Telephone ++64 9 810 9567 Email: michael@mainlinesteam.co.nz

Main Trunk Trekker 13th September 2008.

The trip to National Park for lunch at the Chateau is always an adventure and this year was no exception. The 5:30am start from the Strand Station in Auckland saw a steady demand on the buffet car for hot drinks and refreshments as we headed south to Hamilton where we picked up a large contingent of passengers.



A photo stop was held between Te Kuiti and Taumarunui where 1275 put on a great show in the light rain.

After a servicing stop in Taumarunui, where we also dropped off our tank cars Ja1275 took us up the Spiral for an on time arrival at National Park where the fleet of buses was waiting to take people to the Chateau. Unfortunately the mountains were clouded in but the lunch was great with everyone eating their fill.










Lunch time at the Chateau in the Tongariro Room. Photo: Roger Hall.

While lunch was taking place at the Chateau the train headed back tender leading to Taumarunui where the locomotive was turned and refueled. Those passengers that had elected to stay with the train also refueled themselves at the local eateries. By the time the locomotive was serviced the buses were back and we were on our way home.

In **2009** we are looking at a date in July for this trip so make sure you watch our web site for booking details.

Also coming in 2009.

-  Arthurs Pass Excursions June, July, August and September.
-  Midland Mountaineer to Greymouth.
-  Fieldays
-  Sunday Lunch
-  Chateau Weekender
-  New Zealand Rail Sampler. Using existing rail services and visiting preservation groups with lots of sightseeing in between.
-  New Zealand Steam Tour - October.

Easter 2010. Steam Festival. *(Watch this space)*



Christchurch Depot.

We have dismantled Jb1236 to assess the damage and required repairs to return the locomotive to service, Weka Pass Railway kindly have loaned us a splitter for the crossheads.

CWF Hamiltons have offered us some light fuel oil for the disposing of, we will use my vacuum tanker from work to do this, they have given us approximately 1,800 litres, we have a good supply of diesel for our burner to light up the J courtesy of Transpacific Technical services and have received pallets for light ups from Skopje industries and Freightlines. These will be cut up and stored in one of the Lc wagons we have on site.

Several of our team attended the end of year Barbeque for heritage groups in the greater Christchurch area, this was hosted by Weka Pass this year and will hopefully become an annual event, thanks to WPR for their efforts here, and a good time was had by all.

Lindsay Challis.

Late News from the Parnell Depot.

Ja1240 has had its boiler removed so the work on the locomotive frame can be completed and work can begin on fitting the new tubes to the boiler. You can follow the progress on this locomotive by keeping an eye on the Gallery section of our web site.



Wellington Depot.

The Wellington Depot was heavily involved in preparing equipment for the Feilding Centennial Event as well as the tour train. With Ka942, Ab663, J1211, Aa1013 and Ew 1805 all coming from that depot there were some hectic moments as the deadline for the move drew near. The Ew in particular had to be painted and mechanically certified before going to Feilding.



All the locomotives looked stunning at Feilding and were a real tribute to everyone at the Wellington Depot

involved in getting them there. The Ew generated a lot of good comment and was a surprise appearance to many onlookers. Mainline Steam is working towards getting this locomotive recertified for operation on the New Zealand Rail Network.

After the successful rebuilding of Aa1013 it has been decided that Mainline Steam should work towards having a vintage carriage set for use on short charters and excursions. To that end Aa1489, Aa1669 and Guards Van F721 have been acquired. Thanks must go to Eric Burns for donating F721 to Mainline Steam and Colin Jenner of the Bush Tramway Club for facilitating the purchase of Aa1489. Thanks also to Robin Milne of the Goldfields Railway for the pair of 25330 bogies.

The equipment is all going the Greg and Ali Lang in the Wairarapa. Greg was responsible for the stunning restoration of Aa1013 and the recently acquired equipment will be done to the same standard. Once completed they will be painted in the same green colour of Aa1013. The restoration work is expected to take 3 years. Ab663 will most likely be the locomotive which will regularly haul this set once they are in operation.

Speaking of Ab663 it is currently having new tubes fitted and a number of other issues fixed. The process is expected to take about 7 months. 663 is expected to be used to operate trains on the Taieri Gorge Railway in October 2009.

I would like to thank all the members of Mainline Steam for their dedication and hard work during 2008 and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Ian Welch.