

September 2008

Carterton Mail Express

Wairarapa Railway Restoration Society

Carterton's Historic Railway Station

PO Box 202

Carterton



North Island Main Trunk Centenary

This year marked the Centenary of the North Island Main Trunk (NIMT), events include;

- ⇒ Re-enactment of the Parliamentary Special - the first passenger train to travel the over the entire line. Wellington to Auckland, 6-8 August 2008
- ⇒ All Aboard celebration of rail festival. Feilding, 23 -27 October 2008 (<http://www.allaboard.org.nz>)
- ⇒ Last Spike celebration - to commemorate the official completion of the line when the then Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward drove the last spike. Manganui-o-te-ao, 15 November 2008
- ⇒ Commemoration of the first commercial passenger service on 15 February 2009

Below are photos of the Re-enactment of the Parliamentary Special

Photos; Iain Alisdair Palmer, David Maciulaitis



NIMT History by Bob Stott, abridged version

At our AGM on the 21st September 2008 AGM Bob Stott, former 'Rails magazine' editor and publisher was the guest speaker. The following is an abridged version of his talk, as it pertains to the NIMT.

Exactly 44 years separated the start of the railway south from Auckland and the handing over to the Railways Department of the final section of the Auckland-Wellington line - **The North Island Main Trunk (NIMT)**.

It was on 16th February 1865 that the first sod of a 35 km line from Auckland to Drury was turned. The line was to be built for the Auckland Provincial Council to the standard gauge of 1435 mm.

The Auckland to Drury project foundered for want of capital and it was not until 1872 that work started anew, on a 1067 mm gauge railway south to Mercer. Julius Vogel chose the same gauge as South Africa and Japan. The so-called standard gauge railways today total around 700,000 km, while our track gauge, plus the slightly narrower metre gauge, total around 212,000 km. Broad gauge (wider than standard) totals around 260,000 km.

Mercer was reached by the track layers in 1875, Hamilton in 1877, and Te Awamutu in 1880. Meanwhile, away to the south the Government had been constructing a line from the river port of Foxton towards New Plymouth, via Palmerston North and Marton. This line reached Marton in 1878, and the railway builders continued on into the Wanganui-Taranaki region, but the Longburn-Marton section would eventually form part of the NIMT.

A third stage in what would eventually become part of the NIMT through route from Wellington to Auckland came in 1886 with the opening of the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company's line from Wellington to Longburn, where it connected with the Government line from Foxton. At this time the Government was concentrating on a line via the Hutt Valley through to the Wairarapa. (*The Wellington-Manawatu Railway is another story and doesn't really form part of this story other than in a peripheral way.*)

During the 1880's construction continued at both the northern and southern railheads. In the north, the line was extended from Te Awamutu to Te Kuiti in 1887, and in the south the railways builders started at Marton and had reached Kaikarangi by 1888. (Kaikarangi was the next station north from Hunterville and is now closed.)

By now the northern railway had reached the King Country, which led to on-going problems - for example, surveyors were threatened and survey pegs were removed. If this was not enough, there were problems and arguments about the final route of the NIMT. Every possibility had its advocates. Some, for example, wanted the route to go through Taupo.

By the turn of the century the northern railhead was nearing Porootarao, 33 km south of Te Kuiti, while the southern rails were creeping towards Mangaweka, 51 km north of Marton. Ahead lay some of the most difficult country - most of the viaducts and tunnels, and of course the Raurimu Spiral. This is the region that most people seem to associate with the NIMT.

The southern rail worked its way north towards Taihape, and from there it was up hill all the way to Waiouru. This section incorporated the remarkable horseshoe bend at Turangarere. The builders were now on the Volcanic Plateau and had to cope with many large problems including the building of large viaducts including the 79 m high Makatote Viaduct.

South of Porootarao, for the northern builders, it was virtually down hill all the way and offered few difficulties until it reached the foot of the Volcanic Plateau. The builders found that there was no easy way of surmounting the grade to the plateau. The southern builders had an easy grade all the way to the top of the Plateau, but the northern builders virtually struck a solid wall. It took surveyor R W Holmes to come up with the final solution - the Raurimu Spiral, a railway line that takes 7 km's to climb 132 metres via a series of loops and tunnels.

With the railway now on the Volcanic Plateau it was a fairly easy run apart from the viaducts, and it was not far to the south of the highest of these, the Makatote, that you will find an obelisk marking the site where the 'last spike' was driven. That was driven on 6th November 1908, (November 1908 also marked the take-over of the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company by the Government's Railways Department.)

Although a special train, the so-called Parliamentary Special had run over the line, albeit over several kilometres of temporary track, from Wellington to Auckland in August 1908, it was not until 15th February 1909 that the Public Works Department, which had built most of the line, officially handed over to the Railways Department the final section of track, the section between Erua and Waiouru. This marked the completion of the NIMT and the commencement of revenue service.

For a complete copy of Bob's talk, please contact Rev. Bill Ingleby at williamv@clear.net.nz or phone (06) 3795574

In the Station...

- Tablet layout and telephones
- Ops Room, better flow around displays with the bonus of creating more space
- Perspex sheeting protecting displays

Workshop and yard...

- Yard Lighting
- Northern end entrance at Belvedere Road has had large gateposts (ex bridge spans) and temporary gates installed. This has helped to secure the site from unwanted visitors.
- Shunt Locomotive, TR724, has had a new set of batteries donated and installed, and two TLC visits by members

Goodbye TollRail, Hello KiwiRail

As of the 1st July 2008 Toll New Zealand business units of TollRail, TranzMetro, TranzSecnic and InterIslander once again became government owned under the control of KiwiRail.

As of 1st October KiwiRail will become part of the New Zealand Railway Corporation (NZRC) alongside ONTRACK. Former Prime Minister Jim Bolger will become Chairman of NZRC



Manawatu Gorge Tunnels

To enable Hi-cube containers to be carried by rail in the Manawatu Gorge between Woodville and Palmerston North, the three tunnels closest to Woodville, Tunnels 3–5, are being day-lighted. Tunnels one and two have had their floors lowered already.

By the 6th August 2008, Tunnel 5, the closest to Woodville had been daylighted.

These Photos show tunnels 3, as of 21st September 2008

Photos: Tony Batchelor



Required

- ⇒ Tablet Terminal Switch-out box
- ⇒ Photos of Wairarapa Stations

Upcoming Events

- ⇒ NIMT Celebrations Feilding
- ⇒ Christmas BBQ (members only)
 - ⇒ Date to be advised
- ⇒ Daffodil Day 2009

Station Open Hours

Museum

Every Sunday between 11am and 4pm

Other times by appointment



Contact Details

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Some of the 14 members who visited our Tr 724 on 20 September 2008

L -R

Ian & Ellen Trotman, Ken O'Reilly, Peg Boden, Gary Boden (part hidden), Don Hodge, Marlene Perry

Photo: Kath O'Reilly

Ticket Office

Open for selected south bound trains only

Ticket service provided by Travel Smart Wairarapa

Weekdays

5.45 am to 7.10 am

10.25 am until 10.40 am

3.40 pm until 4 pm

Sunday

5 pm until 5.16 pm

Website

The Society is now online

<http://www.CartertonRailwayMuseum.org.nz>

The site is still under construction but please visit and let us know your thoughts.

Other site worth a visit is

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carterton_Railway_Station



Auckland SA/SD Set #15 during a Test Run to Masterton, seen at Carterton
Photo WGB



Auckland SA/SD Set #15 during a Test Run return from Masterton, seen at Carterton
Photo Ken O'Reilly

The Views expressed in 'Carterton Mail Express' newsletter are not necessary the views of the Wairarapa Railway Restoration Society Inc

Members: Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand (FRONZ), Wairarapa Heritage Association

Acknowledges the support of:



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