

Monthly Report February, 2013.

Tour of Museums, Model Engineers & Heritage Railways.

- Eileen & I were away for 3 weeks mainly in the top half of the South Island down to Christchurch.
- Picton—Checked out the rail activity in the yard & Mechanical depot. Big changes since I was there in 1961 & for the better.
- I am impressed with the Picton model engineers scenic track, although small is in a good location on the sea front.
- AH! Blenheim what a beautiful place this has become, although the 2'.00" gauge Riverside railway was not open being a week day I saw enough of their set up to try & get back for a ride.
- At 11 km in length & laid through parkland really sets the whole scene for what could be a stunning trip—we cannot wait to go back & have a ride—A must in our thinking.
- Right next to the Riverside station at Bradshaw Park is the very stunning scenic ground level track of 5" & 7 ¼" gauges, what a set up!!
- I met some members from the Nelson Model Engineers who were helping set up for a running day to be held on Waitangi day who were only to pleased to give access to buildings etc. This was in preparation for Waitangi day. All I can say is WOW!
- Managed to get some Kiwi Rail train photos at Kaikoura, Picton, Seddon, Oaro; & on the Tranz Alpine to Greymouth.
- We stopped & checked out the Weka Pass Railway & had a look around the workshop area.
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- I was impressed at the general set up there, has that real branch line feel to it.
- With the workshop area separated from the Glenmark station it is like stepping back in time.
- From a personal perspective I feel that drought tolerant plantings would lift the "place in the environment" to a big level in the greater scheme of things. I would suggest Lombardi Poplars, Flax & Agapanthus bedded in with either lawn clippings & or mulch to retain moisture, planted in areas to take away or soften the very stark burnt country side.
- Waikari terminus speaks for it's self in it's location & set up. Well done.
- We were going to going to ride & meet on the 17th of February but unfortunately the automatic transmission in our car packed a sad with the 3rd gear solenoid going US & burning out the clutches at Amberley. Them's the breaks!
- We will return, got have that ride!
- Our host in Christchurch took us out to Ferrymead to have a look.
- The tramway was the top billing for me running through the re created street scenes & around parts of the Estuary, very scenic, friendly staff, & that includes the workshop staff who were very forth coming with information.
- The Diesel Traction group from what I saw is doing excellent work & I feel long term they will deserve a big vote of thanks in what they are achieving. This preservation work is as important as any steam locomotive with a complete set of English Electric models that ran on the NZR. Despite whether you cotton on to the EE locomotives or not, it is important heritage.
- I met up with some of the crew from the Wagon shop for a brief chat as they were preparing to finish for the day.
- The standard of restoration is excellent.
- With only a short & cramped space to me it felt cluttered. It is not always easy to store valuable parts under cover, but as always space is at a premium.
- Once again a lack of a vehicle precluded seeing trains operate & in essence did not have time to go completely around the complex.
- The 2'-00" narrow gauge line once set up will be a good adjunct.

- McCleans Island. WOW very taken with this set up & it fits into the rocky river bed/ pine forest extremely well.
- This railway to me felt it had real purpose & under rated.
- Although there were “relics” on sidings they fitted into what was being portrayed & blended into the environment as they did on the bush tramways.
- It was a pleasure to meet up with the restoration team while they were working on the Price V logging locomotive.
- The model engineers ground level track fitted into the museum site very well. Good set up.
- The stationary steam engines were well presented & the first thing I noted was the port & starboard triple expansion engines from the dredge Ngamoutou which was owned by the Taranaki Harbour Board.
- I had a hand in restoring the pump engine that came from the dredge at the Transport museum in New Plymouth 30 years ago.
- The staff who were present were very helpful & also took me into to see the traction engines.
- My verdict well worth a visit.
- Main Line Steam Depot. Worth a visit but could do with some housekeeping. Hard to make comparisons with a heritage railway as they have a different focus & to be fair a different approach to restoration to those of us who have to tackle a greater number of rail related tasks.
- A BIG THANK YOU TO PAUL MALKHOLM for taking the trouble to show me around. It was appreciated.
- Silverstream Railway. Caught the track gang in action & as always made welcome.
- Envious of their ballast wagon fleet & likewise of Weka Pass.
- Thanks to Brian Bishop, Peter Dent & the others whose names allude me, many thanks for sharing some time to converse. Appreciated.
- Fell Museum. Always a pleasure to come to see their well run display. World class I would venture & thank you for talking for a while whilst closing up.

As always it is good to judge each other in a fair manner,
Including ourselves as we invite comment from others.

It is always good to judge how each of us stack up against each other for the general good & well being of our respective operations & these comments are nothing more or less than that.

These comments are entirely mine. Cheers, Denyse.