



The

Squeaky Wheel



Issue #46 - April 2023

DOCKLINE TOUR & BBQ



The MOTAT Society recently had the privilege of joining with the Tramways Social Club for their Annual BBQ which included a visit to the Dockline Tram shed, where we were treated to a fantastic barbecue and tram rides around the Wynyard Quarter. We would like to thank Jodie and Alan for their hard work in organising this event and ensuring that everything ran smoothly. We would also like to express our appreciation to the tram crew, consisting of James, Andrew, and Josh, for taking care of us and sharing their knowledge and expertise about the trams in the collection. We were delighted to explore the impressive collection of trams and learn more about Auckland's public transport system's history. Our visit was a tremendous success, and we are grateful to everyone who made it possible.

Words and photos by Scott Pilkington



TE TOI UKU - CROWN LYNN CLAYWORKS MUSEUM - Saturday 25 March

“Te Toi Uku is a museum located in Ambrico Place, New Lynn, Auckland on the old Gardner Brothers & Parker brickworks site and next to their original brick kiln. The Museum opened in 2015 and holds a collection of about 6000 objects as well as an archive which includes photographs and designs. The collection mostly relates to Crown Lynn, but also the early brick and pipe industries of West Auckland.

“The museum has displays focusing on two areas. One tells the stories of the early brick, pipe and pottery companies that became the Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Company (Ambrico). The other celebrates Ambrico’s domestic arm Crown Lynn and the people who designed, shaped, decorated and manufactured New Zealand’s most popular tableware from 1948 to 1989. As well as finished pieces the collection contains tools and equipment used to make them.” c. Te Toi Uku website.

A beautiful clear sunny autumn morning. Members arrive by car, by train, by foot, and by charter bus, not without confusion as some emails appear to have not got through.

We meet Robyn Mason, of the Te Toi Uku Trust, a heritage consultant and writer, who skilfully guided our visit. Using the brick kiln as a meeting point we first ventured through to a nearby pocket park, the remnant of a residential garden where the founding families of the industry developed skills and pottery craft. Now surrounded by roads.

The transformation of New Lynn from earth industries to populated residential suburban transport hub and shopping precinct is staggering and almost overwhelming. The change of scale and material is huge and complete. There is no return. The museum tells the story. Bricks have gone to be replaced by concrete. The clay remains as a geological pan beneath. The stories of families and industry growing and competing over a long period enabling the development of greater Auckland. Eclipsed by business and asset stripping for the value of land. We looked in the kiln now the only one remaining. The tall chimney gone.

The Museum houses pottery and clay working machines with some extraordinary photographs of then compared to the now – the view out the window. The Crown Lynn collection is extensive and reflects colour and fashion change across decades.

A great visit with lunch at The Wardroom – recommended.

Photography and article by Bruce Wild



CONVERSATION ON CONSERVATION

Some ten or eleven years ago I was fortunate enough to meet and work with the then MOTAT conservator Gerry Barton. Gerry was a fully experienced and qualified archaeologist fully kitted with an M.A. in the field, who then spent many years training and working as a conservator in many countries, offering huge historic and cultural significance. Countries such as southern European Greece and northern European Germany and on the American continent. His work included the Pacific nations where he was instrumental in saving taonga with the conservation of many Pacific Island artefacts before he returned to New Zealand for the final chapter of his formal working life. Gerry successfully set in motion a considerable element of the conservation of Auckland Museum artefacts before joining us at MOTAT, where he dedicated himself to the conservation of our treasures.

Why I am bringing this up at this time is because in conversation with Gerry a lightbulb was lit in my brain, reaching far into dimly lit recesses, exposing them to new ideas. I, being deeply involved in the production of our one-time much-missed Driving Wheel magazine, persuaded Gerry to write a piece on what he does as a conservator and why now I shamelessly attach a portion of his contribution of ten years ago below where he talks of the restoration of Meg Merrilees and the revisions necessary to ensure the engines survival as an authentic following a conversation with a restorer at the time.

"Paul's narrative spanned more than a century of repairs, alterations, additions on account of technological advances, re-locations, bangs and bad ideas, all of which have culminated in the locomotive now undergoing restoration.

"As one might in detailing this history, the story started at the rear and ended up at the front where Paul is in the process of mounting the headstock upon which, later, will be mounted the buffers and cowcatcher. I was intrigued by the difference between the left and right sides, the right being perforated with a number of oval holes to house the headstock bolts, the left being featureless except for some burnishing on the surface of the iron. It transpires that the elongated holes are botched, the result of a do-or-die effort in the past to fit the headstock by force-fitting the bolts. If re-used they are likely to result in stress-fracturing of the wrought iron members with concomitant consequences for the buffers and cowcatcher.

"Beginning with the left side, the restoration work has filled the oval holes with low hydrogen welding rods, thus the smooth, burnished surface from grinding them flush with the mounting plate. The next task is to identify the correct locations of the holes by looking at blueprints, historic photographs and chaff marks on the metal.

"Furthermore, on the right side, further poor workmanship in the past has resulted in a drop of the corner framing, a situation, if left untreated leads to knock-on misalignments. Not only did the workmanship and focus on detail of the current restoration interest me - this picking up of errors from the past and rectifying them - but also the attention being paid to detail in doing the job conscientiously, made the result indistinguishable from a managed conservation job. Essentially the approach as described to me was, 'If the job is going to be done, then do it properly.'

"The only area in which I, from a conservation background, departed company from the result was the lack of documentation for future restorers to call upon: historic photos, a work diary, blueprint references, specifications, work in progress photos, etc. A point readily acknowledged by the railway engineers present.

"So here, once more, conservation can provide help by assisting in the documentation process, not just in the railway section but generally speaking across the whole spectrum of collections. Much of MOTAT's restoration remains oral history, and this needs to be tapped, collated and placed in the archive."

So what has this got to do with now? Quite a lot as it happens. The ongoing value of quality restoration ensures conservation - the work that the restorative volunteer is doing since Gerry Barton's making us

aware of the importance of lifting the standards - and will make it possible for future generations to see for themselves where their technology has come from. Just as today we can look back on the pioneering of the internal combustion engine and its enablement of flight so shall our great grandchildren enjoy that because of the careful preservation work.

In the Aviation workshop a major restoration is currently underway in preparing the ex NAC Douglas Dakota for movement into the display hall. There has been a huge effort to restore the fabric control surfaces of ailerons and elevators using techniques which could well have been lost had it not been for the training passed down long ago by previous aviation engineers. The interior of the aircraft has been tidied and cleaned, missing instruments re-created using modern 3D printing, and rotting panels replaced with recreated aluminium which blend authentically with existing panels. The final touch has been to remove the corrosion around the engine and undercarriage area and finish with a beautiful coat of paint.

A recent school of thought promoted by myopic lecturers at obscure universities far removed from reality is that artefacts should be left as they are found and put on display in that state with non or minimal conservation work. Fortunately for our world of MOTAT that creed does not yet have traction. In MOTAT it is long recognised that rust and aluminium corrosion is continually invasive especially in our coastal humid climate. It is established that without intervention by ourselves many of our exhibits would by now be just piles of ferrous or aluminium oxide. In short we have saved them from disappearing forever.

Our thanks go to Conservator Gerry Barton for his raising our game and some ten or so years ago making us aware of the importance of allied to authentic restoration correct conservation

And for that blinkered view of non-restoration it is irrefutably confirmed that ferrous oxide is an unforgiving chronic insomniac.

by Henry Swan

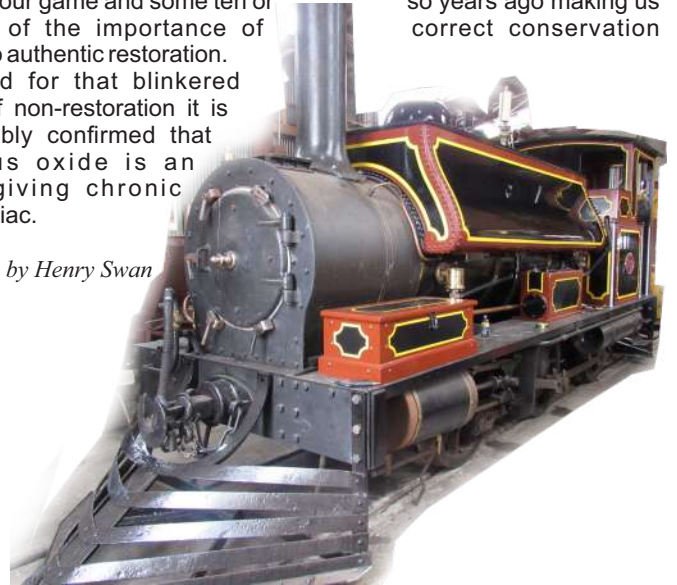


Photo of MOTAT's Meg Merrilies from MOTAT Society archives

AGM / SGM & MOTAT SOCIETY RULE CHANGES

The MOTAT Society Special General Meeting originally held on 16 November 2022 was adjourned (along with the Annual General Meeting that followed it) to 15 February 2023 due to a lack of quorum. The purpose of the SGM was to propose an update to the MOTAT Society's rules. The most significant of these rule change proposals was that the quorum for an Annual or Special General Meeting be reduced from 30 to 15 reflecting the reality of the current number of members of the Society and the numbers who have been attending AGMs over recent years.


A further proposal was the removal of the complex committee election sub-clauses in their entirety allowing nominations for committee members from the floor and a change of committee members from ten (10) to be between seven (7) and ten (10). Other, mainly banking terminology adjustments relating to the receipt and use of cheques which are no longer valid, were also proposed. The motion to approve these changes was carried unanimously at the rescheduled SGM on 15 February 2023.

At the AGM following the 15 February 2023 SGM the 2023 MOTAT Society Committee was elected as follows:


John Tutchen (Chairman)
Henry Swan
Bill Rayner

Bruce Wild (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Burch
Makyla Curtis

Alan Curtis (Treasurer)
Ross Goldsworthy
Scott Pilkington



MOTAT Society April Excursion to
GLENBROOK VINTAGE RAILWAY
 23 April 2023



Ride the trains all day between Glenbrook Station and Waiuku in a carriage reserved especially for the MOTAT Society. Or disembark at Waiuku for a bit of a gander around the town and take the next trip (there are four) back to Glenbrook. Stop off at the Pukeoware Workshops on the return trip to view current restoration projects.

Contact the MOTAT Society Administrator on admin@motatsociety.org.nz to book your ticket on the April Glenbrook Vintage Railway Excursion



MOTAT Society May Excursion to
The Heritage Sites of Matakoho
 20 May 2023



Spend the day exploring heritage abundant Matakoho with the MOTAT Society's 20 May Excursion. Matakoho has so many heritage sites to explore from the Kauri Museum and Totara House, to the post office, pioneer church and cemetery.

The Society pays for members' travel and entry. Non-members also travel for free. Lunch at Gumdiggers Cafe is at attendees' cost.

Contact the MOTAT Society Administrator on admin@motatsociety.org.nz to book your ticket.

Keep an eye out
 for future
MOTAT SOCIETY
Excursions

- 23 April:**
Glenbrook Vintage Railway
- 20 May:**
Matakoho Kauri Museum
- (TBA) June:*
Maritime Museum
- (TBA) July:*
Ross Bros Museum
- (TBA) August:*
Bush Tramway Club
- (TBA) September:*
Whangarei Steam & Train
- (TBA) October:*
Thames Goldmine Experience

Write For...

The Squeaky Wheel



The MOTAT Society is currently seeking contributions for its quarterly Squeaky Wheel newsletter. If you have a story, photograph or item of interest that you think might interest our readers we would love to hear from you at admin@motatsociety.org.nz

THE MOTAT SOCIETY CONTACTS

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