

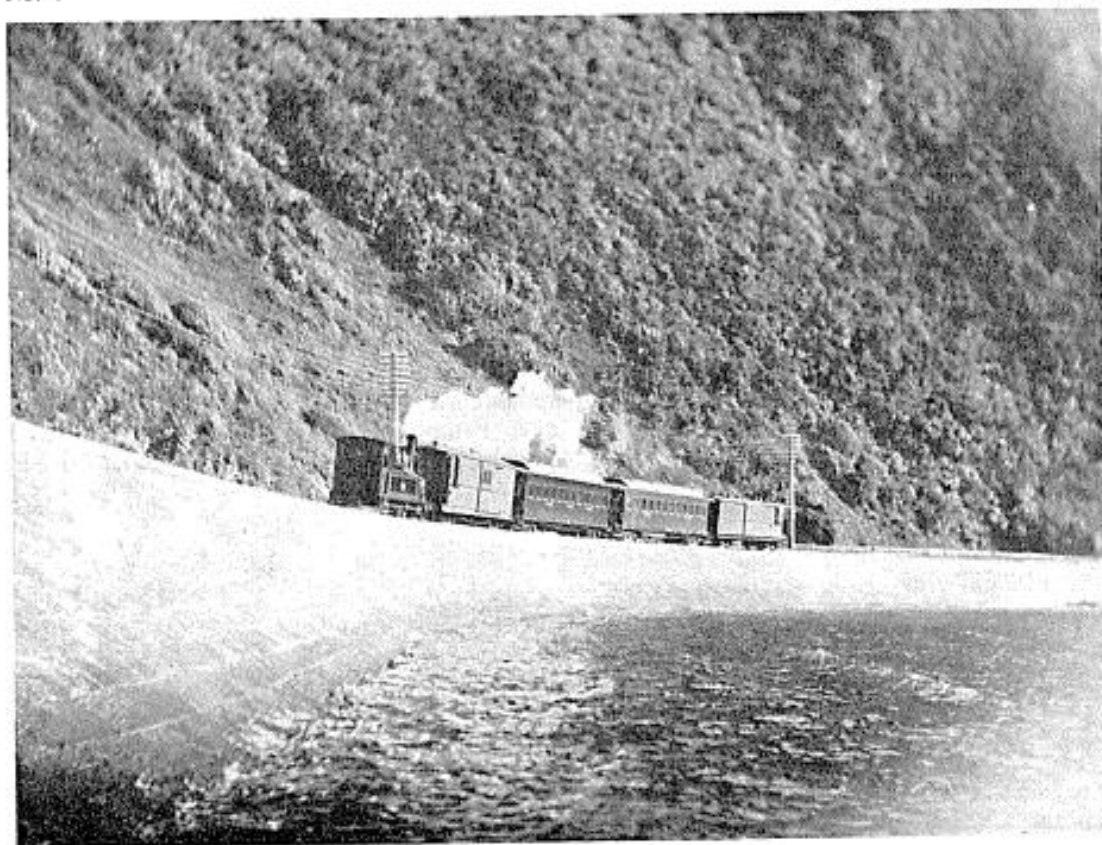
A Century Between Wellington and Lower Hutt

THE CENTENARY of the first section of railway opened at Wellington occurred on 14 April 1974. It was the 13-km line between Wellington and Lower Hutt which, when opened in 1874, was the first part of the railway planned to link Wellington with Masterton. Its story has been told in these pages by D. G. Hoy in some detail (Volume 21, 1964, pp. 40-48, issue No. 100) and again in his book *Rails out of the Capital* published by our Society's Wellington Branch in 1970. Accordingly we shall not dwell here on its early history, but rather shall look at some of the trains that have been seen on this short section of railway in the hundred years since 1874.

The first trains between Wellington and Lower Hutt were hauled by small 4-wheel saddle-tank locomotives, later class "C", but no photographs from this period seem to have survived. Much the same applies to the "D" class 2-4-0 tank locomotives in this area. It was not until A. P. Godber began in the 1890s to train his camera on trains and locomotives that any semblance of a continuing photographic record began to accumulate. Hence our first three selected illustrations are from his camera. All are reproduced from prints supplied to us before his collection was bequeathed to the Alexander Turnbull Library.

No. 1

Photograph: A. P. Godber





No. 2

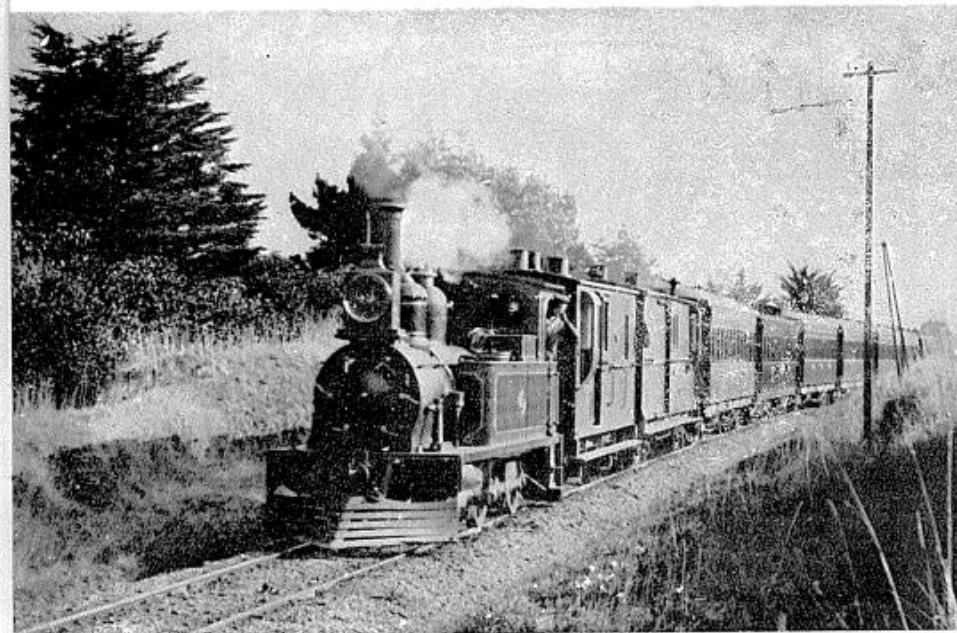
Photograph: A. P. Godber

No. 1 — About 1900 Mr Godber's camera captured a morning train from Lower Hutt to Wellington near Rocky Point about midway between Petone and Ngahauranga (*sic*). It was headed by one of the "L" class 2-4-0 tank locomotives of 1877. The single-line railway in 1900 still hugged the shore line of Port Nicholson with curves as sharp as 6 chains radius. Train speeds between Petone and Wellington were restricted to 25 m.p.h. as an absolute maximum.

No. 2 — We assess the date of this picture as about 1910. By this time most of the "L" class locomotives had been rebuilt as 4-4-2 type tank engines, and three new ones had been built in the workshops. This "L" class 4-4-2T is leaving Petone with a northbound train. Note that the line here is now double track. The railway was duplicated from Lower Hutt through the new Petone station in July 1905 and was subsequently extended southwards in stages, with much easier curves (to allow speeds up to 40 or 45 m.p.h.), until Wellington was reached in 1911.

No. 3 — Back to about 1900 again, and here we have one of the original "L" class locomotives with quite a substantial afternoon train on the single line between Petone and Lower Hutt. Note the two old 4-wheel guard's vans at the head of the train.

No. 4 — By 1923, when Mr Stewart visited Wellington with his camera, much larger tank locomotives were in charge of the trains running between Wellington and the Hutt Valley. This illustration shows one of the 45-ton "Wd" class 2-6-4 tank locomotives, a 1901 product of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, U.S.A., crossing Davis Street with an afternoon train outward bound from Wellington's Lambton station.

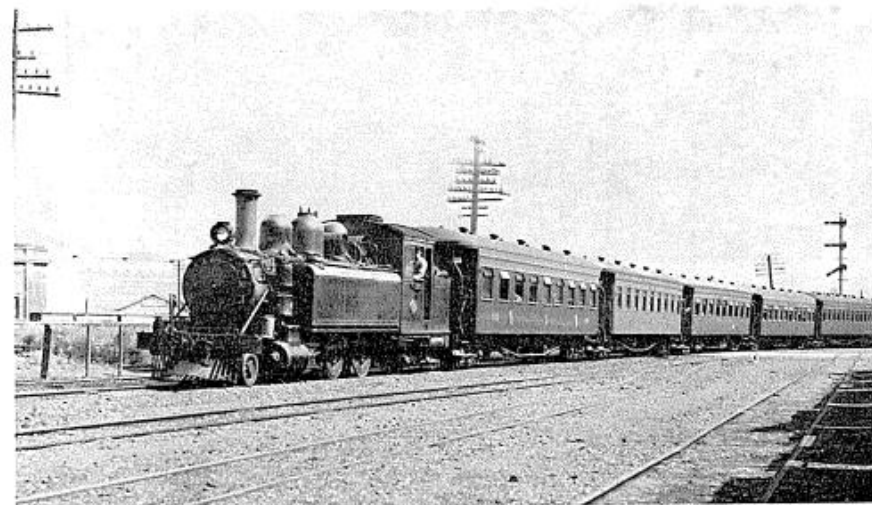


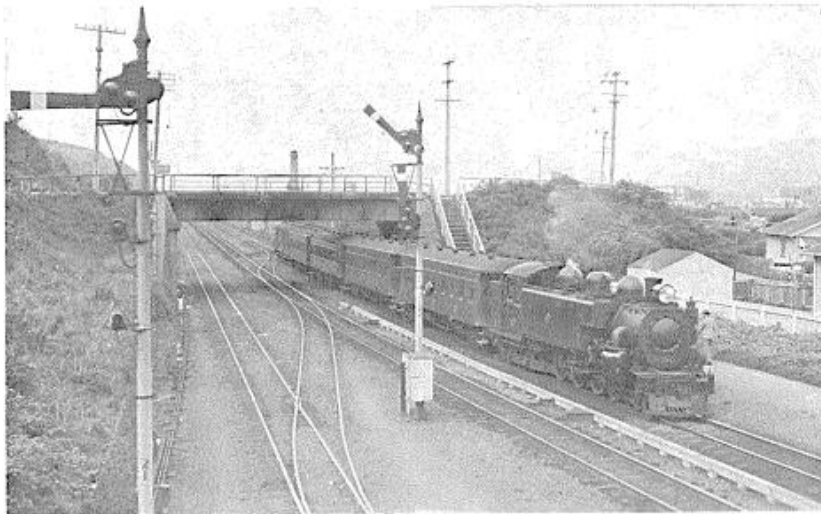
No. 3

Photograph: A. P. Godber

No. 4

Photograph: W. W. Stewart





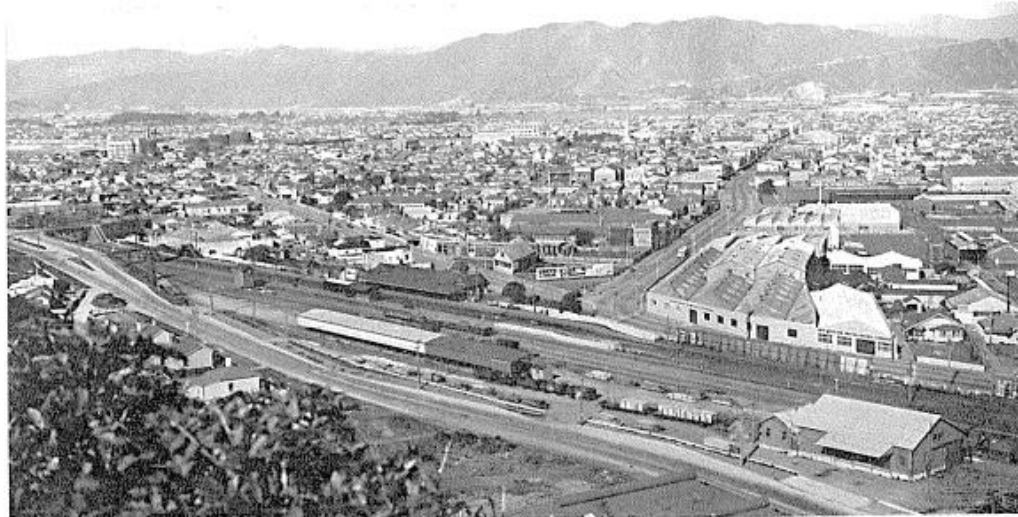
No. 5

Photograph: W. W. Stewart

No. 5 — By the 1940s, most suburban trains on the line between Lower Hutt and Wellington were being worked by the 51-ton "Ww" class and 71-ton "Wab" class 4-6-4 tank locomotives. On 18 October 1947 W. W. Stewart caught "Wab" 800 (now happily preserved by Les Hostick and his associates at Te Awamutu) entering Petone station with a Taita-Wellington train. The three-position upper-quadrant signals

No. 6

Photograph: T. A. McGavin



No. 7

Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity

had been installed in 1922 as part of the first automatic signalling system on the NZR. When his photograph was taken they were soon to be replaced by 3-aspect colour-light signals.

No. 6 — In 1946 (at left) this is how Petone railway station and yard appeared from the Korokoro Road. Note the very small shelter on the up platform, and the position of the original signal box. Jackson Street, the principal business thoroughfare of the town, leads prominently away towards the background. Readers with sharp eyes will discern the 3.10 p.m. Wellington-Upper Hutt railcar pulling away from the up platform.

No. 7 — A "Ww" class locomotive brings a long rake of empty "deckers" ("J" class double-deck sheep wagons) back from Petone to Wellington for redistribution to loading points in the Manawatu one sunny morning in the late 1930s. South of Ngahauranga, the train is about to pass under the new overbridge carrying the Tawa Flat deviation of the main trunk railway.



No. 8

Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity

No. 8 — By July 1955 electrification of the railway between Upper Hutt and Wellington was complete, and frequent multiple-unit electric trains were running daily. This 6-coach train, south of Petone, is setting out alongside the Hutt Road for Wellington in the distance.

No. 9 — In 1965, to make room for motorway construction, the railway through Ngauranga was completely relocated on reclaimed land. In this view, south of the station, a "De" class diesel-electric locomotive with a down goods train passes an "Ed" class electric locomotive with the 4.5 p.m. Wellington-Upper Hutt train.

No. 9 (opposite, upper)

Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity

No. 10 — During peak traffic periods morning and evening, multiple-unit trains are supplemented by trains of ordinary carriages hauled by electric locomotives, usually of the 1,800 h.p. "Ew" class Bo-Bo-Bo articulated type supplied by the English Electric Company in 1951-52. In this picture the class leader, No. 1800, is seen with the 6.58 a.m. Taita-Wellington train south of Rocky Point about 1964. Contrast this with the picture on page 17.

No. 10 (opposite, lower)

Photograph: R. J. McGavin

