

Media Release

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Unique restoration opportunity now Kaitangata's boiler has returned.

Visitors to Shantytown will be able to see a steam train being rebuilt from scratch after the boiler from Shantytown's Kaitangata steam train returned to Shantytown this week.

An ultrasound of the Kaitangata's boiler revealed internal cracks so after 3 months remedial work at Lyttleton Engineering the boiler arrived back onsite on Tuesday to be fitted back onto the chassis of the Kaitangata.

A unique bonus for visitors and train enthusiasts alike is that anyone visiting Shantytown over the next 3 months' will be able to view the train's progress as she is restored from scratch - it's not often that anyone can see all the components of a steam train being put back together.

The Kaitangata (or 'Katie' as she's affectionately called), one of 2 fully restored steam trains operating all year round for visitors at Shantytown Heritage Park, is currently out of service due to having its 10 year survey.

While all trains do undergo an annual boiler survey, once every decade trains must undergo a full survey which requires a total strip down of all components of the train and re-certification of its boiler.

The restoration work will be carried out on site at Shantytown and involves rebuilding and repainting the engine and steaming up for service. Once complete, Shantytown will switch over to the annual survey of its other operating steam train – the L508, an 1877 L-Class, also known as 'Gerty'.

The Kaitangata, or Katie, is an improved F-class steam train, was built in 1896 and her boiler in 1922. Originally built for the Kaitangata Coal and Railway Company, when their mine closed in 1969 she was generously donated to Shantytown Heritage Park. Katie now works the Infants Creek Tram Line and proudly carries thousands of passengers and train enthusiasts annually.

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