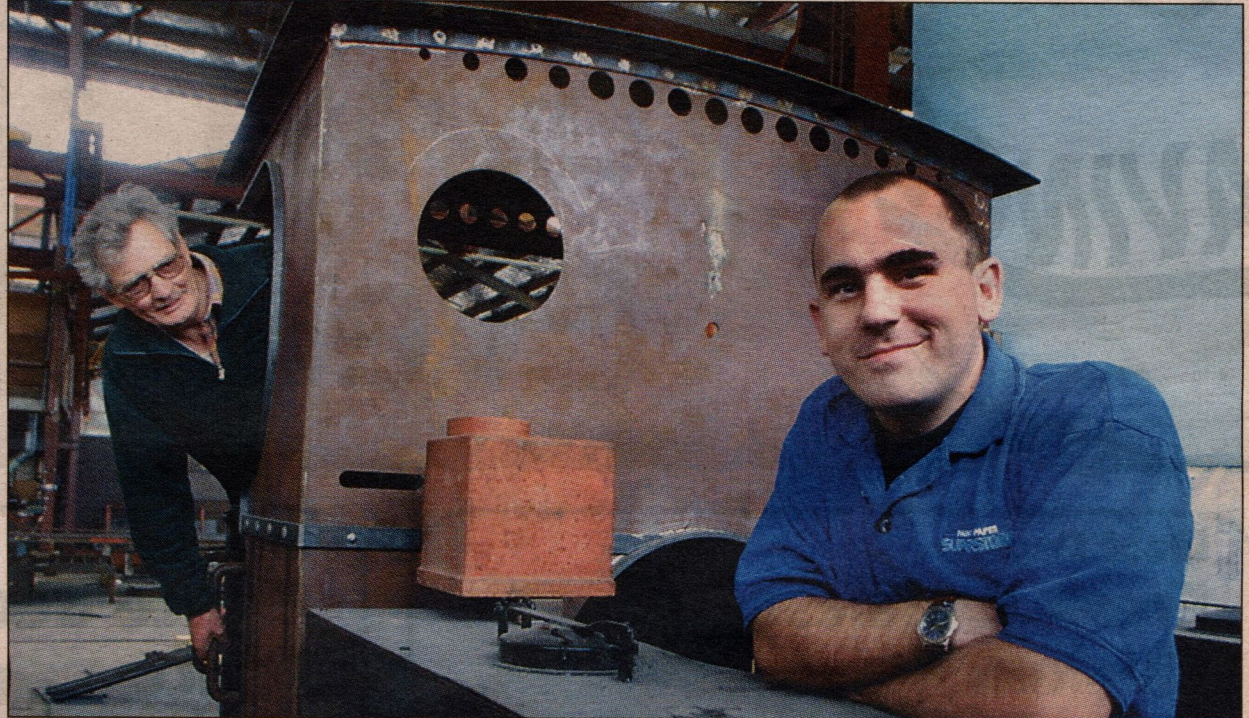


# Little engine back on track

■ PAULINE SUTTON revisits the Hawke's Bay Steam Society to see how it is progressing with its refurbishment of a small steam train called 531. Last time she saw it — two years ago — it was just "a pile of junk" on the floor. Now the tiny steam engine is emerging, although its rebuilders have reached the stage where funding is required.



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**HAWKE'S BAY Steam Society chairperson Bob Brooking (back) and committee member Jason Durry, with the new 531 cab.**

A plan to have a steam locomotive for Hawke's Bay has reached a point where funding is now required to complete the goal.

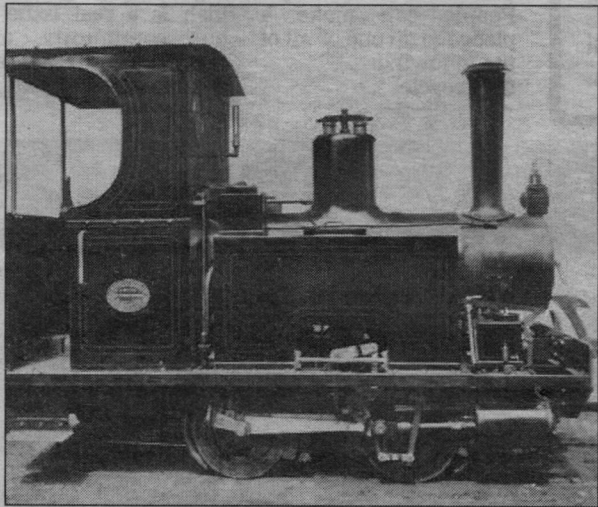
The Hawke's Bay Steam Society, formed specially two years ago to get a small work-horse steam engine back on the rails, has had to delay its

plan because the boiler now has to be replaced.

Chairperson Bob Brooking says an official inspection of the original boiler revealed if it was used the lagging would have to be taken off for a full inspection every 12 months "and that really wasn't on".

He estimates about \$30,000 will be needed for a new boiler which means the society has to go fundraising.

So far funds for 531 have come through membership fees and donations of money and materials.



# From junk to former glory

The engine being recreated by the Hawke's Bay Steam Society is 531, a small work-horse engine supplied by Barclays of Scotland to the Public Works Department in 1921 to help build the Stratford-Okahukura Line.

It was found in bits in three different sheds on the back of a Nuhaka property. After being sold by Public Works in 1938 for grade easement works in the Auckland district, it was written off in 1954 but escaped the scrap man. The society hopes to see it running at a variety of local locations — rail yards, private sidings or heritage trails.

# Dedication brings little engine back to life

There are about 40 members but of those, about a half dozen have been active in the restoration.

Napier Engineering and Contracting (where Bob works as an engineer) has provided space to store the locomotive and also use of its workshop on weekends. Bob says it has been a matter of "who you know" with Steel and Tube, Eastbridge and Paint and Paper Superstore also offering sponsorship.

The restoration team has so far spent 1800 hours on the project.

When it first arrived at the Onekawa workshop it looked, to the layman, like a pile of junk.

The cab was in such disrepair it had to be completely rebuilt, using the old as a pattern.

"We've built up and machined the journals on the axles, reprofiled the wheels, bored out the cylinders and refaced the valves," Bob says.

"We have also made new pistons, valves and shafts, new crossheads and new springs.

"We've refurbished the frame, straightened the headstocks, sandblasted and painted the frame, put in new tanks and coal bunkers."

They have also been working on new couplings and refurbishing all the valve gear and linkages and refitting them.

It has not been all work and no play. Bob says a couple of barbecues have been held along the way to boost the team's spirits.

It's certainly been a labour of love and I have to say it's a very cute little engine with "little" being the appropriate word.

At only 3.9m long, just over 1.8m wide and 2.5m high and weighing 7.5 tonne, 531 is portable which means it can be put on the back of a truck and taken to destinations.

The society is hoping to gain additional funding for the pro-



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**THE ORIGINAL boiler, pictured with Hawke's Bay Steam Society committee member Jason Durry. It now has to be replaced.**

ject by applying for various grants.

"People love steam engines. They're magic. They're alive. I'm a railway buff from way back and I just know other people will be interested."

Anyone wanting to become a

member is invited to telephone Bob on 844 0476 or Jason 842 1686 or attend the society's annual meeting to be held next Wednesday at 7.30pm at HB Model Engineering Rooms, Anderson Park (next to the miniature railway).