

Fox Glacier Guiding welcome back an Ol' friend...

Back in the 1980's Mike and Carrol Browne welcomed a new addition to the team...a 1968 Bedford bus which was originally used as a public bus in Auckland.

People and inanimate objects that come to Fox Glacier often acquire a nickname, some more interesting than others, and in this case the bus got landed with 'Blue' due to it's paintwork.



In the 1920's the Newmans Brothers' ran one of the first bus services to South Westland. The company decided to repaint 'Blue' red, black and gold to resemble these traditional Newman's coaches.

Over the years 'Blue' has transported thousands of glacier walkers to and from the glacier carpark. It has had a hard life. Many different guides with varying degrees of skill have driven 'Blue'. The motor blew up in 2002 and 'Blue' was given a life saving motor transplant operation. As a result of living on the West Coast it has become quite rusted and it really looked as if 'Blue' was on it's last legs or should that be wheels!

Rather than say goodbye to an old friend Fox Glacier Guiding decided to give Blue Bus the makeover that it deserves. The team from Gary Hutchison Panel and Paint took on the massive task. Firstly, the inside was refitted and painted and then the engine and body were completely overhauled. If buses have guardian angels then Gary was certainly Blues! No detail was left untouched; hours and hours were spent ensuring that every possible part of Blue was finished to perfection. It certainly created interest and a talking point amongst vehicle enthusiasts who passed through Gary's Hokitika workshop.

Blue balloons were hung, blue jellybeans were distributed and a few be vies were consumed to welcome back Ol' Blue (as it is now affectionately known as) to Fox in October. A huge roar went up from the staff as Ol' Blue was driven back into town, engine humming to perfection and its shiny new paintwork glistened in the fading light. Mike Browne was given the first honour of taking the team for a highly anticipated ride around the town.

Thanks to Gary and his team's 600 hours of work Ol' Blue will be able to drive people to the Fox Glacier for many years to come!

