



KINGSTON FLYER HERO FINDS A HOME

▲ Shirley-Anne Monaghan, Donna Hawkins, Pam Naylor and Mayor Gary Tong at the memorial opening.

The king of the Kingston Flyer has a permanent place in Garston.

A memorial seat for Russell Glendinning, the man who drove the famous steam locomotive for more than 30 years, was unveiled there on 22 February. It incorporates a life-size cutout of the famed train driver, who also served the northern Southland and Queenstown communities for nearly 40 years as a St John Ambulance officer.

The feature includes an information panel about Russell's life and is sure to become a well-used visitor photo opportunity.

About 120 people turned out on a beautiful late summer's day for the unveiling ceremony, which was led by Pam Naylor, the Parawa-Fairlight member for the Northern Community Board and former chair of the Garston Community Development Area subcommittee (CDA).

Among the crowd were Russell's family members, St John Ambulance, train drivers, railway enthusiasts and members of the Garston, Athol and Kingston communities. It was "quite moving", Pam says.

"Everyone spoke of Russell's caring nature and how he was always willing to help other people before himself. In latter years when he had cancer he still cared for the sick through all northern Southland, from Lumsden right through to Kingston, for St John. He still went out for call-outs, He didn't put his own health needs ahead of others."

The seat was fittingly covered with a St John flag and unveiled by Russell Glendinning's daughter Shirley-Anne Monaghan along with Southland District Mayor Gary Tong.

Pam says Shirley-Anne and her son Chaz were overwhelmed with the memorial.

Creating the seat and information panels was the final project of the former Garston CDA, which was disbanded last year. The idea to commemorate Russell Glendinning started percolating with the CDA after Russell died in 2017.

He had been technical advisor for the Garston CDA's railway project since it started more than 15 years ago. The community had wanted to identify Garston's place on the former rail line and



Russell Glendinning's grandson Chaz Monaghan wears his grandfather's medals with pride at the opening.

Russell was approached for advice on what equipment to get and how to get it. He gifted two old jiggers to Garston – the velocipede (a two-person hand-operated jigger) and a four-person motorised jigger. They were in disrepair but were restored by Peter Naylor.

"Russell was so passionate about rail."

"If you were around him you just got caught up in the fever. He was willing to share his knowledge and skills. He wanted the next generation to inherit that."

After Russell died, the CDA wanted to recognise his work in northern Southland. Pam talked to Southland District Council senior designer Donna Hawkins and work began on creating the concept. Aaron Abernethy from DBE Engineering in Garston built the seat and sourced wheels from old farm machinery. The structure was kept rustic in keeping with its surroundings on the Garston green.

Pam says she feels the Garston community has done Russell Glendinning proud.

