



Another Fowler from Mount Edgecombe Sugar Estate, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Sandstone's "Sandy" has a sister!

Our Fowler 0-4-2T locomotive, "Sandy", (Number 14316 of 1914) has been with us since 2002 and was acquired from the old Ratanga Junction Theme Park in Cape Town after the closure of their 2ft Narrow gauge railway. Since then the site has been revitalised and the old railway is now operating as a Tramway. The original railway was built to too light a standard for the locomotives acquired and derailments were frequent.

Another survivor from the extensive sugar railway system of Natal, after service on the Mount Edgecombe system "Sandy" was sold to Free State Geduld Mines in Welkom where it was rebuilt by the Chief Engineer, Dick Davidson, and used on a small piece of track for children's Christmas parties before being mounted outside the mine offices. During its period at the mine, number 14316 was named "Sandy" by Mr. Davidson. As with many of the surviving sugar estate locos not exported in the 1970s it eventually found its way to Midmar where it was put into service. To increase its coal and water capacity, Dick Collyer and his group at Midmar built a four wheel tender for "Sandy" which was sold together with the loco to Ratanga Junction in 1998. In working order, "Sandy" saw some use at Ratanga Junction but with the very light rail it had endless derailments. Coupled with a regulator problem, "Sandy" was set aside in the shed at the complex. With the risk of such a locomotive being exported, Sandstone soon acquired her in 2002 and she was moved, together with the tender, to the Eastern Free State. After a thorough check over, a new boiler certificate and the fitting of vacuum brake equipment, "Sandy" was put into service. Surprisingly powerful for her smaller size, "Sandy" is quite capable of pulling short passenger or freight trains and has a pleasant beat, not dissimilar to a 15F.



"Sandy" at work at Sandstone. Picture by Paul Stratford

The tender constructed at Midmar has not been fitted so that she now runs in her original condition. With an open back to her cab, the green liveried "Sandy" is extremely popular with passengers as they can observe the crew at work, almost as good as being on the footplate!



"Sandy" with her tender at Midmar. The tender is now coupled to Sandstone's Barclay No 1. Picture by Wilfred Mole.

One of our frequent UK visitors, Alan Middleditch, sent us a picture of "Sandy's" sister loco from Mount Edgecombe in South Africa, Fowler number 13355 of 1912 which is now at the Statfold Barn Railway in the UK.



"Saccharine" at Statfold Barn Railway. Picture by Alan Middleditch.

Named "Saccharine", this loco saw out its working life at Mount Edgecombe Sugar Estate and was plinthed at Mount Edgecombe until 1978 as the KwaZulu-Natal sugar railways closed and was sold to the UK. It ran originally in Scotland but then was moved to Statfold where it was totally rebuilt and steamed again in 2010. You will notice the different chimney as Statfold did not feel that the original spark arrestor version, as used on "Sandy" as well, was suitable although in the South African sugar cane fields it was essential with the ongoing risk of fires in the sugar cane! Visually which chimney do you prefer?