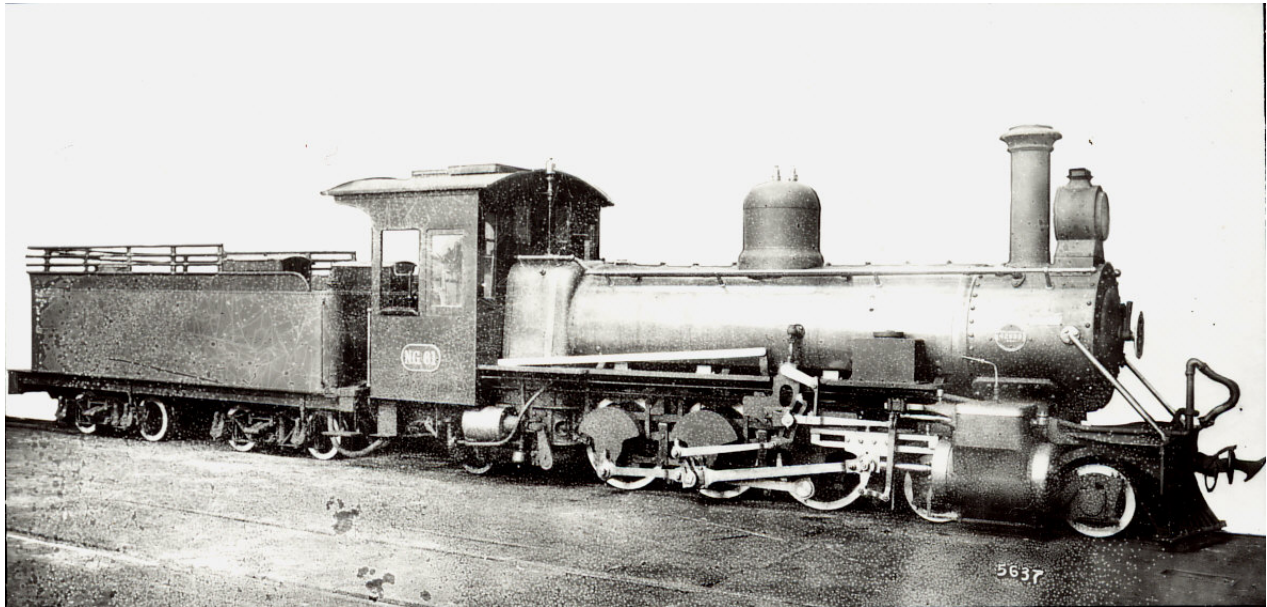


Class NG10 South African Railways Number 61. The restoration begins.

The sole surviving NG10 narrow gauge pacific has been in the Sandstone collection for a number of years and has been overshadowed by the ongoing rebuild of the NGG11. Recent examination of the loco has led to further investigations in to its condition and restoration has now commenced. One of only four ex SAR narrow gauge tender locomotives with the two "Lawleys" in the collection and the NG15, NG10 No 61 has a tractive effort of 12302 lbs compared with Lawley BR7 at 3000lbs and an NGG16 at 18850 lbs which can make it a very useful locomotive.

During the period of the First World War, the Avontuur line was suffering from a shortage of motive power. No British builder, due to the war effort, could supply the requirements of the line and Baldwin supplied two classes of locomotive. The NG9 class was a 4-6-0, while the NG10 was a 4-6-2. Baldwin were not strangers to the South African narrow gauge, having supplied three locomotives in 1902 with a further one in 1911. These are generally referred to as Class NG7 and were of 2-6-0 wheel arrangement. Unlike the NG9, the NG10 was much more stable in reverse with its rear pony truck and could operate at a higher speed making its usage much more flexible. The NG9 having a tendency to derail over 10mph in reverse.



The Baldwin works photo of No 61. Picture courtesy of Leith Paxton.

The Class NG10 were typically American in appearance, even to having the number on the smokebox door, although the sand dome was moved to the conventional British position as sand boxes on the running plate. They also had a huge cab, which found favour with the enginemen of the day. In the previous Baldwin locos the firebox and ash pan was kept clear of the rear driving wheels and extended almost to the tender draw bar positioning the driver and fireman on either side of it. (When the NG10's were replaced by the NGG13's, the engine crews were not amused by the cramped cab conditions of the Garratts despite them being much more powerful locomotives). The chimney also had a rather ornate capping. Five locomotives were delivered in 1916 numbered 61 to 65. No 61 being Baldwin works No 42633. Put to work as bankers on the Loerie bank and Patensie Branch, the class survived until 1962.

Two locomotives, 63 and 64, spent their last days in SWA but the gauge conversion there led to their demise and those other NG10 survivors in Port Elizabeth with the cascading of the NG15's. Number 61 was put aside for preservation and given a cosmetic overhaul. The locomotive had by now lost its ornate chimney cap with the chimney now of the rather unattractive stove pipe design but the capping was reinstated. The tender had also been modified with the original coal rails replaced by steel panels and the bunker extended in height.



Number 61 at Humewood Depot before withdrawal. The changes to the chimney and tender can be clearly seen. Picture by Leith Paxton.



On display at the Humewood Narrow Gauge Museum.

Having been exhibited at the Narrow Gauge Museum at Humewood Road, number 61 was finally moved to the Humewood Road diesel depot after the Museum's closure. Some 40 years in the salty air had the obvious effect on number 61.



Number 61 at Humewood Road Diesel Depot. Picture by the late Chris Gammel

To prevent further deterioration the locomotive was moved in 2006 to Sandstone's facility at Bloemfontein and stripped for assessment. Initially the boiler was seemingly beyond repair but further examination has revealed that it can be rebuilt and in September 2016 the boiler was sent to Keith Stevens's facility in Howick for rebuilding. The tender is also badly wasted and a new one will be built from scratch as the frames are also badly rusted.



The boiler of No 61 on its way to Keith Steven's workshop for restoration. Picture by Lukas Nel.



The tender tank taking shape. Picture by Lukas Nel.



The first plating has been rolled for the coal bunker. Picture by Lukas Nel.

Another similar locomotive on the Brecon Mountain Railway in Wales, is sometimes referred to as an NG10 but this was built in 1930 to a similar design to operate on the EPPC line in Port Elizabeth from Chelsea on the Avontuur line to the EPPC cement works in Port Elizabeth carrying limestone. It has also been restored to its original condition with three domes and a smaller tender, having been modified during its work with EPPC.



The similar Brecon Mountain Railway Baldwin 4-6-2 in June 2016. Picture by Sandstone.

As the last survivor No 61 is a significant part of South Africa's narrow gauge history and its return to the rails will be another milestone in Sandstone's preservation achievements.