

MAYBE A TRIP TO SANDSTONE?



Health & Safety is taken very seriously on Sandstone Estates, particularly bearing in mind it is a working farm and much of the collection of vintage equipment is used regularly on the farm. However, having received your instructions on the subject, you will be trusted to be able to take your pictures, under the watchful eyes of the stewards, just as close as the people shown here. Rod Hering

We have being spoiled for weather in many parts of Britain during the summer of 2022. Maybe it's repayment for those days we spent pretty much alone during lock down thanks to Covid, but unfortunately we all know one day, all too soon, these long, warm, enjoyable days will soon be replaced by wet, cold, dark and miserable ones. This will surely be the case by November. Fear not because I can let you into a little known secret that can solve the problem.

In my days at sea in the Merchant Navy, I was allowed to take my wife with me on a voyage, wherever that may be, once I had achieved the rank of Second Engineer. On one such occasion the voyage was out to New Zealand leaving from Glasgow in late November and my wife had jumped at the chance to come with me. At the time Plantation Quay in Glasgow was being demolished and the environment was grim.

The developer had come up with a simple solution to demolishing the tenements, actually in their day rather nice buildings, using two very large crawler tracked bulldozers and a huge steel anchor chain. The two machines, attached to each other by the chain, drove down either side of the buildings in effect sawing their way through them. Cheap and effective as the rats that lived in them



You could walk out onto the large field used for display of steam and motor vehicles and get up close to machines similar to the steam crane. Every engine, such as Fowler B5 crane engine No.9403, has its own personal history plate attached so you can learn all about them easily. There are many items awaiting restoration for you to look at too. Rod Hering



This is what awaits you on the other side of that cloud of steam. An unimaginable array of narrow gauge locomotives housed in a building containing many interesting items related to, mainly, rail transport. The blue locomotive would have been very at home in the days when British Railways operated the Vale of Rheidol railway at Aberystwyth and used a similar colour for their engines. Rod Hering

suddenly found out, rushing out with nowhere to go.

We were very glad to finish loading and leave that awful place.

Four weeks later we sailed into Auckland on a bright, sunny, summer's morning. As my wife described it, "from hell to heaven in just four weeks".

You could make that same transition even more quickly if you decide to take the plunge and visit the Cherry Blossom Festival due to take place at Sandstone Estates in South Africa on 18th-19th November 2022, being run in conjunction with the local Cherry Festival around the area.



If you want something a bit more sedate you can ask to be taken for a ride on a variety of vintage vehicles. The ultimate laid back ride is on the ox cart. Unfortunately if you attend the Cherry Festival, you will not see the beautiful fields of flowers in this picture because they don't come out until the Easter event. You will have to make do with the Cherry Blossom.



There is a good collection of military equipment in the collection though not all comes out to play as close as these. On special events such as the Cherry Festival, outside groups add to the show. South Africa has some unique military equipment related to the days when it was subjected to sanctions by the rest of the world. Rod Hering

You would fly into Johannesburg, situated at 6000+ feet up, so high as to be a perfect temperature at that time of year and drive about 3+ hours, about 400km through beautiful countryside to reach the 17,000 acre estate where you will have complete freedom to explore a vast range of vintage machinery of every imaginable type.

From experience, I can tell you that you will not be disappointed at what will be on show but at this time of year you will have the added bonus of millions of cherry blossoms which unfortunately you will not be able to bring home except in your pictures and memory but you can bring home some cherry brandy to enjoy at Christmas by the fire. I suggest you consult the internet, travel agent or Sandstone directly as to the best way you get there.

Peter Brockington

EXCITING NEW BOOK ON THE SANDSTONE STEAM RAILWAY

THE SANDSTONE STEAM RAILWAY THE STORY CONTINUES

Sandstone Heritage Trust has just published a second book on the world famous Sandstone Heritage collection in South Africa. Following on from the success of the first book published in 2006, this 220 page hard back coffee table book in landscape format encapsulates, in words and photographs, the Sandstone Heritage Trust collection that nestles in the vast, rich agricultural grain and cattle Landscape of South Africa's Eastern Free State. This new publication illustrates the grit, determination and vision of the founders to save a representative cross-section of the transport history of Southern Africa. By virtue of its location, this living collection complements the beauty of the area with its 3.5 million year old Sandstone cliffs, lakes and snow-covered, cosmos-clad farmlands in the winter months.

The book documents the history of the Sandstone Heritage collection of transport relics from the days of European imperialism and empire building. Almost a generation back, the need by the then Transnet Heritage Foundation to secure a safe home for resources at a collapsing museum in KwaZulu-Natal saw Sandstone Estates being approached to rescue the exhibits. The embryo was 'alive'.

Over nine chapters, the glossy publication looks meticulously at the history of every single locomotive (both narrow and Cape gauge) as well as each piece of acquired rolling stock, coaches and dining cars together with other complementary heritage categories such as military vehicles, cars, trucks and buses, vintage tractors, earth-moving equipment all surrounded by the crops, flora and fauna of the extensive modern farming operation at Sandstone Estates.

The text is rich in recollections and memories of challenging

expeditions to rescue artefacts throughout South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The time consuming negotiations that typify African politics makes this book more than a catalogue of assets. Almost without exception, heritage items saved would otherwise have seen the cutting torch or been lost to pervasive rust and neglect.

The collection has contributed to South Africa's tourist industry and community development in the local Free State area. European tour operators have brought locomotive enthusiasts and other transport buffs to experience the live, working railway on the farm by way of regular shows and open days. Huge agricultural fairs, record-breaking ploughing competitions and what has become known as the 'Sandstone experience' are featured in the book.

The book is a must for any heritage enthusiast and is available online on the Sandstone website: www.sandstone-estates.com. Click on the 'Online Shop' tab.

In the UK the book costs £29 including post and packing. In South Africa the cost is R795-00 including VAT and delivery. The book is available in the USA at US \$34. Delivery on quotation.

THE SANDSTONE STEAM RAILWAY, THE STORY CONTINUES

Compiled by David Richardson. Hard Cover, 340mm x 280mm. Published by Sandstone Heritage Trust, 2022. ISBN 978-0-620-95820-2

