

International visitors make welcome return to Sandstone

By John Titlow

SANDSTONE Estates in South Africa, home of the world's largest collection of 2ft gauge locomotives and stock, has welcomed international visitors for the first time in four years since the Covid-19 outbreak.

Two days were spent on a photographic charter, which is nowhere near enough to sample this newly-built railway. Its last major tour was the 'Stars of Sandstone' event in 2019, as reported in issue 254. Feedback was very positive, with once again Sandstone pulling out all the stops.

Four South African Railways Garratts were steamed for the photographic sessions. Two were British-built NGG16s identical/similar to the ones used on the Welsh Highland Railway, in Beyer Peacock NGG16 No. 113 and modified NGG16A 155, affectionately called the *Red Dragon*. The two other locomotives were German-built NG15 No. 17 *Kalahari* and NGG13 No. 49 from Hanomag.

Sandstone has the advantage of being a self-contained network on private land with a large, unrivalled heritage collection. Military vehicles, agricultural equipment, vintage buses, cars and trucks, traction engines and a span of oxen with original ox wagons help recreate the past. The line is in the process of being extended and

NGG13 No. 49 approaches Sandstone's Vailima Siding on April 6, 2019. JOHN TITLOW



a collection of 3ft 6in Cape gauge locomotives will be on display.

Welsh narrow gauge and Isle of Man photographic charter organiser David Williams has organised a six-day tour to Sandstone on May 10-16, 2024. Several British locomotives and the two Lawley 4-4-0s from 1895 and 1897 will be in steam, as well as several Garratts paired with authentic freight and passenger stock. Land arrangements for coach transfer

and trains is £1390, while nearby accommodation will be in the region of £600.

There will be an extension to the trip with a tour in South Africa's Western Cape, featuring at least three 3ft 6in gauge main line locomotives.

Several scenic branch lines will be covered, run in conjunction with the Ceres Rail Company, which has a track record of delivering quality services. Trains will be original and runpasts will

be held at the best locations. Travel between locations will be by rail, with overnight accommodation in quality hotels close to the start/finish point of each day's charter train.

To make a booking or for further information, contact David Williams at 30 Clydesdale Road, Quinton, Birmingham, West Midlands B32 1DP. You can also email djw.edit7@btinternet.com or telephone 07979 212526.