

MASSEY PROTOTYPES



August 2021

www.heritagemachines.com

Tractor

— AND FARMING HERITAGE MAGAZINE —

DEERE DELIGHTS MODEL B VARIANTS

RURAL RELICS

PIERCE SEED DRILL

**NEW
SALES &
FREE ADS
SECTION
INSIDE**



**RARE
BREEDS**

OLD ENGLISH GOAT

No. 218 AUGUST 2021 £4.40



ALLIS BUYING GUIDE



CLASSICS IN ACTION



FERGIE & SAWBENCH



WORKSHOP: NUFFIELD CLUTCH REPAIR

CLASSICS IN ACTION

The Sandstone Experience

WORDS AND PICTURES Peter Love

South Africa has been a haven for working classic machinery for decades and Wilfred Mole of Sandstone Estates and the Sandstone Heritage Trust has been collecting and using them for decades in Eastern Free State, South Africa.

Preservation

Sandstone Heritage Trust is a private preservation initiative established on a commercial 17,000-acre farm in the Eastern Free State in South Africa (4.5 hours from Johannesburg, flight time nine hours from the UK). The present owners purchased the farm from the missionary Wille family in 1995. The farm has been in the continuous ownership of the Willes since the 1840s, which means the farm has only had two owners for over 170 years amazingly.

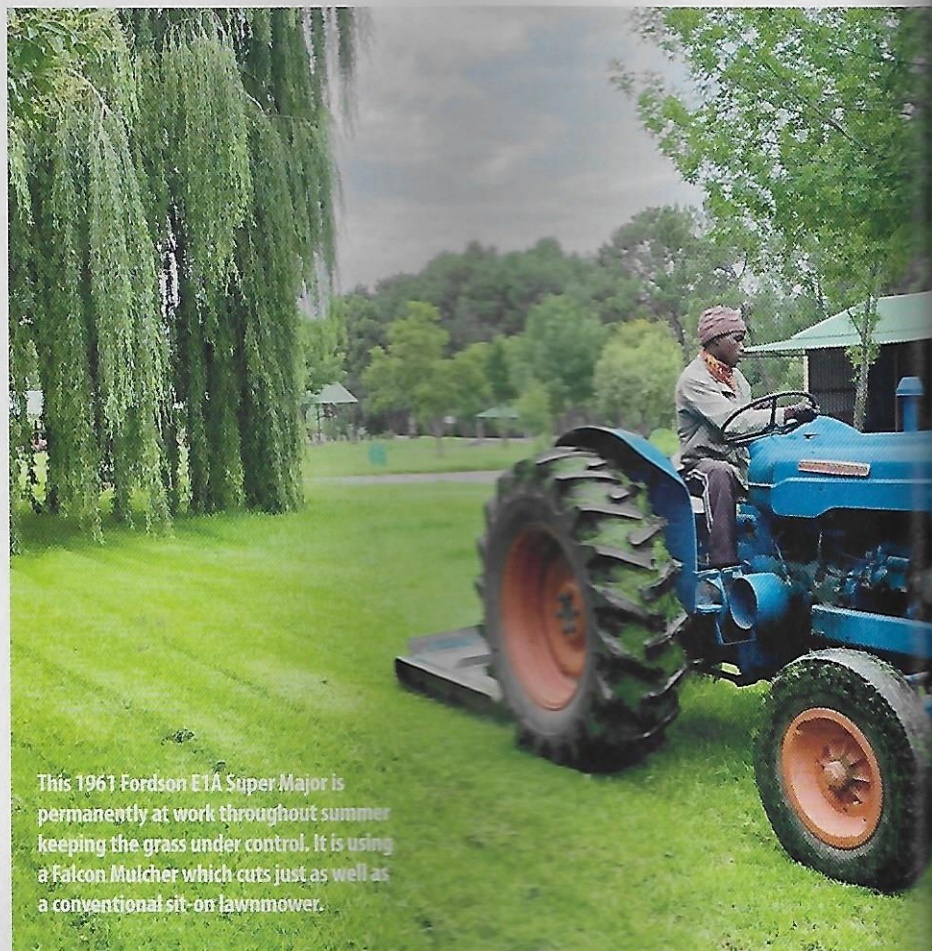
The arable farmland along the little Caledon River which makes up the official border between South Africa and Lesotho (MF 100 series dominates in Lesotho in all conditions) is rich in agricultural potential. It is a particularly beautiful part of South Africa with sandstone outcrops nestling under the towering Maluti Mountains which sit high above the Drakensburg range. It is an area where farming has proceeded quietly using traditional methods for centuries.

Living museum

Many of the farmers living in this area have a great sense of history and had preserved farming machinery and continued with farming practices, which are more nostalgic than commercially realistic. The farm Hoekfontein was therefore in a way a living museum with Lanz Bulldog and John



Looking from above at the set up at farm Hoekfontein; rather different from when Wilfred took it over in 1995.



This 1961 Fordson E1A Super Major is permanently at work throughout summer keeping the grass under control. It is using a Falcon Mulcher which cuts just as well as a conventional sit-on lawnmower.

Wilfred Mole of Sandstone Estates in Eastern Free State, South Africa has kindly taken delightful pictures of just some of the tractor fleet in action during 2021, especially for *TFH*.

PART ONE

Deere 720 diesel tractors still in daily use even in 1995. Even though they were simply going about their business, the Willes without realising it had created an environment that would have delighted any agricultural machinery enthusiast.

The new owners recognised this and decided from the outset that they would

This superb 1952 Oliver 88 Fleetline row-crop standard doesn't carry hydraulics and is seen raking in Cosmos seed.



do everything they could to maintain the facilities, machinery and even the skills needed to keep the old farm machinery and farming methods operational. The machinery is not obsolete from a practical agricultural standpoint, and so to this day, the practice of continuing to use old machinery to carry out important functions on the farm is studiously adhered to.

Railway

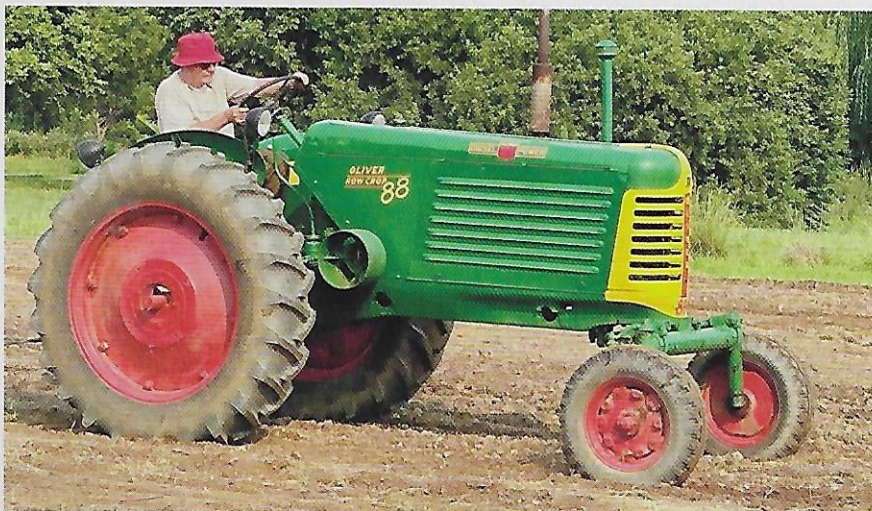
Sadly, the Midmar Museum which was a joint venture between the Kwa-Zulu Natal Parks Department and the Heritage section of the National Railways was dissolved by mutual agreement in 1997 and a selection of narrow gauge assets and the railway line came on the market. This event would give a new direction to the Sandstone heritage programme. These assets were put up for auction, which Sandstone put in a bid for and being the successful bidder Sandstone Estate was suddenly the owner of enough components to create a 2ft narrow gauge railway. It was decided to lay some track and to bring one of the SAR NGG16 Garratt's back into steam. ➤



Sandstone has three John Deere 730 diesels for a variety of tasks. This one is permanently married to this Vermeer Chipper.



The chipper has to be moved around, which means the tractor is stationary often, but it's an electric start and ready to go when required.



Wilfred Mole himself on the well-restored Oliver 88 Fleetline; it certainly carries plenty of lights.

For the uninitiated, these are big powerful 'super power' steam narrow gauge locomotives of 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 wheel arrangement and are known as Beyer-Garretts. They were invented by British engineer Herbert William Garratt and are articulated and feature three major components. The central frame (or bridge) features the boiler, firebox, and cab. The two other major components, one at each end of the engine feature a pivot to support the central frame to the steam engine units, with driving wheels, trailing wheels, valve gear, and cylinders.

Above these is the coal or oil at the rear and water on the front unit. The whole purpose of these Beyer-Garretts that were made by various manufacturers across the globe was to be able to go around the tight curves and confines of a narrow-gauge system, but at the same time have double the power to pull heavy trains on lightly laid track. These engines did admirably well in South Africa on the 3ft 6in standard gauge and particularly the 2ft lines. Today several ex-SAR engines work on the Welsh Highland Railway in North Wales.

NGG 13 and 16 class 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 formed the core of the SAR narrow gauge fleet with 12 NGG 13 and 34 NGG 16 class engines made by German tractor manufacturer Hanomag between 1927-29 a further four were made by Cockerill in 1937. Beyer Peacock of Manchester supplied a further seven locomotives via the gauge change of the Tsumeb Copper Corporation to 3ft 6in. The final SAR eight Garrett locomotives were built by Hunslet Taylor in Jo'burg these are the very last Garrett locomotives made in the world and were completed in 1968.

Tractor records

A pivotal point in the Sandstone Heritage programme development was the decision in 1999 by Sandstone to hold an innovative attempt at the World Record for the maximum number of vintage tractors (pre-1960) working in one field at one time pulling an implement. To make it more interesting for spectators, a short section of railway line, which had been obtained from the Midmar auction, was built and the Garratt with a few coaches was cobbled together. The event was in fact the first attempt of its kind and it took



Wilfred's father purchased this Massey Ferguson 135 new in 1965 from Swaziland. This tractor is permanently attached to a UK manufactured Hydrocut log splitter. They have been inseparable for ten years now and this tractor, which is completely original and has never been restored, works superbly.



Ford Force 4000 purchased new by Wilfred's father in perfect running order. A great general-purpose farm tractor and in this case bringing logs to the chipper.

place amidst great international fanfare and it was a pleasure for the writer to be invited to attend this amazing event, which was a real eye-opener in many ways.

It was awarded a Guinness Book of Records certificate and 99 tractors took part even though there were already hundreds more tractors on site here awaiting restoration of some kind or another. The selection at Sandstone is amazing not only from Europe, principally German manufacture, to UK and American makes remembering that South Africa just loved John Deere two-cylinder tractors and Internationals as well as Italian Landini tractors. It was all here not forgetting the Ferguson and "Blue Bottle" Fordson E27N Majors which arrived by the boatload in the late Forties. Add to this fact was that Wilfred Mole had previously acquired several mighty First World War period dinosaur tractors from the late Oscar Cook, Billings, Montana, US collection (previous to the Cook's 1998 sale) and they were running here as well.



The 1959 John Deere 730 standard diesel is an extremely good tractor for general haulage duties because it is strong, economical, and reliable.



A little David Brown 885 is very reliable and when there is a job to be done, it's there!



A hugely powerful tractor is their 1956 Massey Ferguson 95. On the move is the Leeds-built 1901 Fowler B5 crane engine back to its resting place after being in steam up that day.

The rest is history with the record then going to Australia and then back to Sandstone, South Africa in 2002 and to Cooley, Republic of Ireland the same year with 1832 tractors eventually taken in June 2006 at Hullavington, Wiltshire with over 2000 and finally to Cooley again in 2007 when amazingly 4572 tractors took part. I had the pleasure of giving the commentary on that very wet day and that record still stands. South Africa can be truly proud of the fact of what was achieved from those two events in hosting what certainly galvanized interest in people around the world to preservation in South Africa.

However, one has to admire Wilfred Mole, who has taken machinery to every one of these world record-breaking events.

Expansion

At that 1999 event, the formative little railway did not go unnoticed, and the enthusiasm expressed for its very existence encouraged and motivated the management at Sandstone to continue to extend the line. Rail and sleeper stock soon ran out, but fortunately, the closure of the Majestic Highlands water scheme in Lesotho gave large volumes of 2ft narrow gauge rail and other materials becoming available again at auction and Sandstone purchased these.

Recognising that there was no one in particular in South Africa encouraging the purchase, transport, and restoration of 2ft narrow gauge assets of historical interest, Sandstone without necessarily having set out to achieve that objective, took on the challenge and the collection as it stands today was established. Remembering there is also a good number of 3ft 6in engines and equipment here.

In many ways, the cards fell successfully into place because in the late Nineties the old steam running shed at Bloemfontein became available for rent and Sandstone took up the offer to establish a steam locomotive rebuild facility there. Some of the original fitters, such as Lukas Nel, who had worked there for many years, were enthusiastic about supporting the venture and joined Sandstone.

More than 40 locomotives have been rebuilt, some of them were in a parlous state and the technical excellence of locomotives on the farm is largely because of the professionalism and dedication of Lukas and his team in Bloemfontein. Today the railway is over 30 kilometres long and is the key to the site's preservation success, which in pre-Covid-19 days held a magnificent and highly successful ten-day-long April heritage festival with people travelling from all over the world to take part. With such beautiful scenery, it is a photographer's and wildlife haven.

Next time more on the crops, livestock, and machinery on the Sandstone Estate. Peter Love would like to thank Joanne West, Wilfred Mole and his various photographers and journalist for making this article very possible.