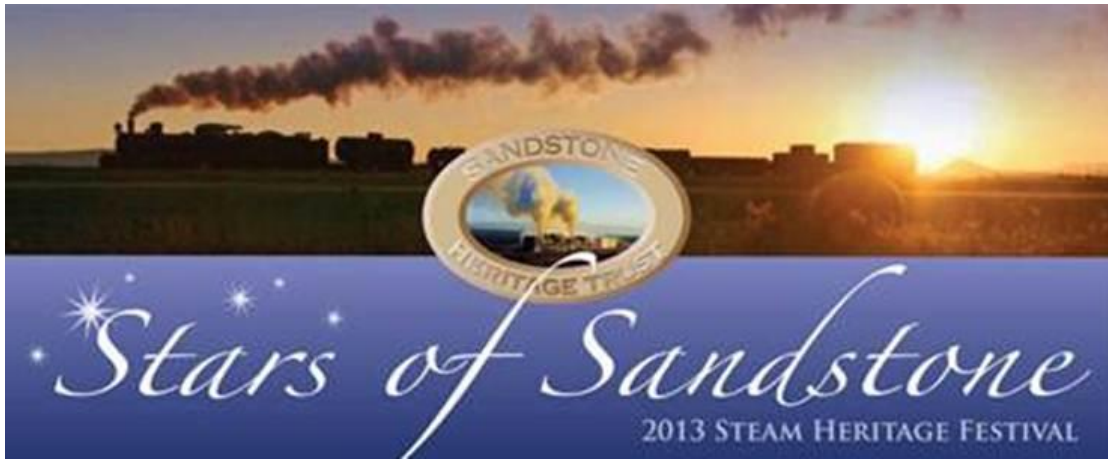




4th-12th May 2013

Relax, you will not be bombarded by newsletters for the next year or so.

The purpose of this newsletter is just to thank all of you for coming.

To those who didn't come you may have missed something special.

Here are some of the comments that we have received so far:

"Congratulations on an excellent Stars of Sandstone Event. We had a great time, the food and all the arrangements were of a high standard. Please convey our thanks to everyone that was involved in the event." – Gerhard and Reinette Wille

"...as I am writing this e-mail I still page through the pages of my memory to relive what was an extraordinary day. I sincerely appreciate everything you and the "Sandstone team" prepared for us. The experience I had at Sandstone was surely unforgettable and one I will treasure for many years to come." – Adriaan Snyman

"You and your superb team clearly dedicated an enormous effort to the organisation required to ensure that Stars of Sandstone was such a great success. I was amazed at the scope of your heritage operation, the attention paid to every detail of the event and all the excellent, beautifully maintained facilities. Again, many thanks for my memorable two days at Sandstone. You have built an extraordinary, world-class operation which gives great pleasure to hundreds of people. I hope that Stars of Sandstone survives and thrives for many years to come." – Andrew Dix

"Thank you so much for giving me once again the opportunity to be a part of it all. I very much enjoyed every moment. It was an absolute pleasure being there. Thank you so much!" – Shawn Spaan

"Many thanks for the opportunity to visit Sandstone last week – I really enjoyed Friday with the Military parade in the morning and the train trips later in the day. Please thank all involved with the catering – the meals were most enjoyable, and also thanks to all Sandstone staff and the volunteers who made things happen." – Bruce Brinkman

"Some 20 Steam enthusiasts from the Cape ventured to Ficksburg to experience the Sandstone Steam Festival. I was amazed to meet so many people from all over the world. The largest group was from Australia and New Zealand, with England next and then Germany and Switzerland. These overseas experts tell me that there is nothing similar to be seen anywhere in the world and many of them come back every year, so it was rather disappointing to see how few local participants there were." - Hans Matter - Chairman, Crankhandle Club, Western Cape.

1) Request for photographs.

This year we will be requesting our visitors assist us as follows. We are inviting you to take space on our web site under the Stars of Sandstone section where you would do the following:

- (a) Pick the best of your pictures, say 20 or so.
- (b) Add captions to each.
- (c) Write a short general introduction of how you got on at the event.

If you send these to Joanne West (E: joannewest@btinternet.com) she will arrange to have them put on the web site quite quickly. If you would like people to contact you please include your contact details so people can contact you direct.

In the short term we are looking for pictures of the Military salute that took place on the Friday morning. We have had a request for these from the School of Armour.

2) Publicity.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/life/travel/2013/05/03/trainspotters-get-their-choo-tjoe-on>.

A blog link from Paul Ash, Travel Editor for Sunday Times SA. Many familiar faces appear herein - <http://blogs.timeslive.co.za/wanderer/2013/05/14/return-of-the-iron-horse/>.

3) HRASA.

We were sad to see that the Heritage Railway Association of SA were not represented at all, and in fact South African preservationists should take a moment to consider that Australian, American, British, Belgium, German, New Zealand and many other nationalities were well represented. Heritage projects like this only survive if people support them. There is far too much verbage regarding Preservation on the Internet and not enough direct involvement by enthusiasts.

4) Aircraft.

A big thank you to the pilots who flew in to our event. Although there weren't a lot of aircraft at Sandstone this year they definitely created a special ethos of their own.

Everyone was so sad to hear of the passing of Laurie Kay and we think that the effort made by Jeff Earle, Gavin Brown, and Mike Lombard, together with their support team was a fitting tribute to Laurie's memory. We were so sad that Laurie Kay never saw Sandstone before he died.



These fine gentlemen, as well as Jan Jefferiss and Andrew Dix, gave us wings to complement the Stars event.

Sandstone is immensely grateful to the pilots who provided an opportunity for our top African staff to fly over the farm. Thabiso's face in the photo below says it all.

Photo credit: Jan Jefferiss

5) Military vehicle programme.

This was much bigger, much more organised, and much more impressive than ever before. A full report will appear on the Internet.

In addition, a special Sandstone Military Heritage DVD is being produced separately from the Stars of Sandstone production.

For those who didn't stay until the last day on Sunday here is a sequence of photographs of our Sherman in operation.



Photo credit: Gerald Hall

6) Clothing.

Thanks to all of you who brought clothing to our event. This is currently being sorted and will be distributed in the next few days to those needy villagers who have to face the severe Eastern Free State winter without adequate protection.

7) Water tower.

Apologies to those who expected to find a Victorian water tower in place at the Running Shed. The locos weren't even cool before Leon, Theunis, and Isak got stuck in to putting these water tanks up.

In simple terms, it missed the train!

8) Facebook

Sandstone is now on Facebook! Please see: <http://www.facebook.com/SandstoneEstates>.

All photographs that we receive which were taken during Stars will be loaded onto it soon.

To all of you who came thank you for your kindness, thank you for your enthusiasm, and thank you for your sense of adventure.

From the Sandstone team- Wilf, Mike, Peter, Des, Len, Leigh, Lukas, Henry, Leon, Wouter, Isak, Theunis, Andre, Johan, MJ Dennis, Ernest, Mahasane, Mosala, Peter, Tshiliso, Thabiso, Sankie, Motlalepula, Petrus, Siele, Jan, Tumelo, LD Mofokeng, Tanki, Khoashela, Nduma, Goloko, Cecilia, Selina, Motlalepul, Mapulane, Petrus, Lehlonolo, Motsoane, Matheatsie, Tieho, Mokete, Poni, Nothemba, Lefu, and all the volunteers.

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"Preserving the best of our past for the future"