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Old TRACTOR

Issue 119 August 2013

IHC TRACTOR TRAIN

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NUFFIELDS STAR

FORDSON COMES HOME

DUAL NUFFIELD DEBUTS

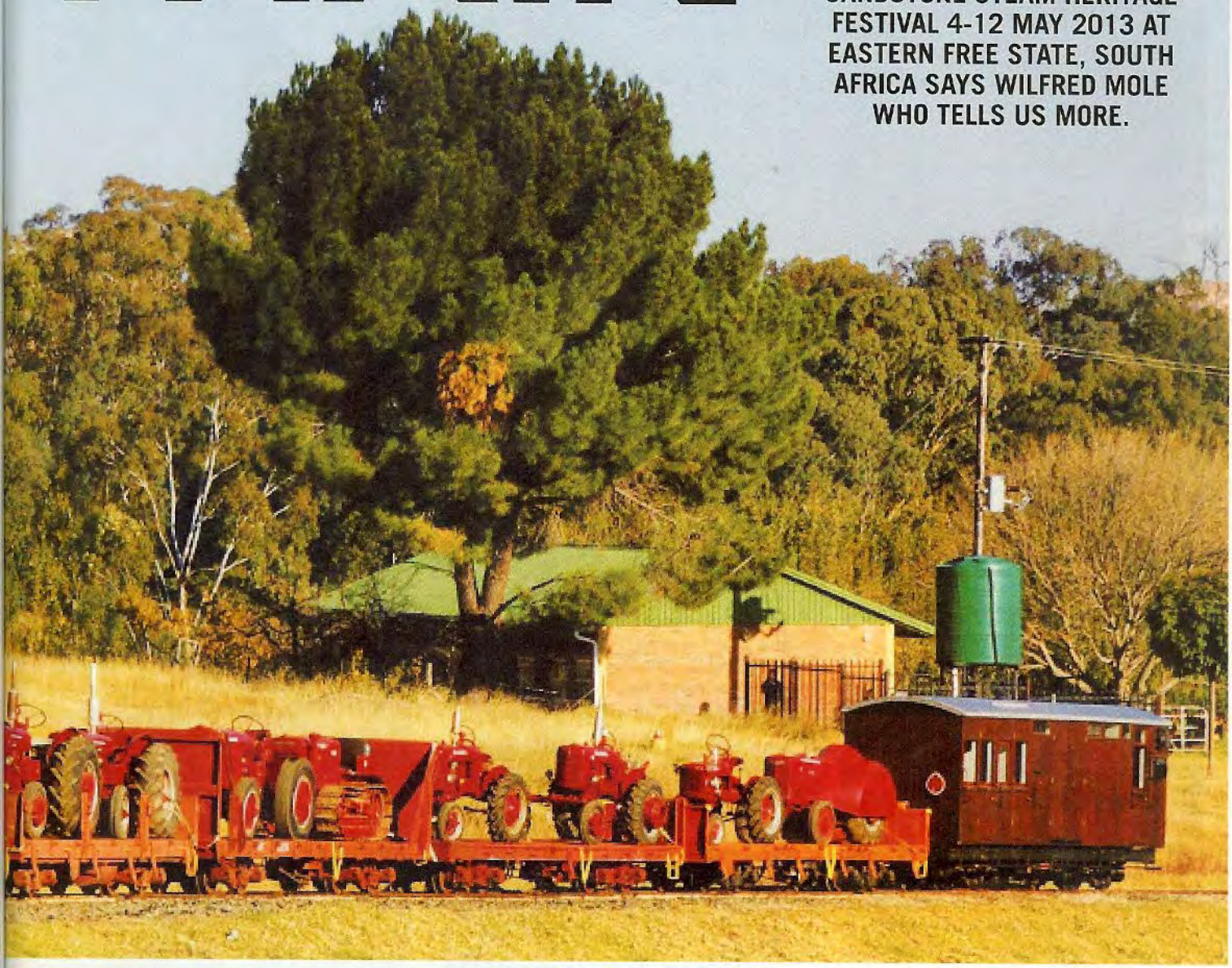
TRACTOR

Powering up the 1in 38 grade, one of the steepest grades on any railway, goes the tractor train with 1937 Beyer Garrett NGG 13 number 88 at the front end.

What a wonderful sight, all thanks to the efforts and help of Wilfred Mole's team, the scenery makes this location very special.

TRAIN

INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER CO TRACTOR TRAIN WAS THE HIGHLIGHT AT THE STARS OF SANDSTONE STEAM HERITAGE FESTIVAL 4-12 MAY 2013 AT EASTERN FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA SAYS WILFRED MOLE WHO TELLS US MORE.



With speed up, the tractor train travels its 21klm journey in May 2013, especially for Old Tractor magazine.

Making way for something bigger at Hoekfontein the Mclearn compound TE awaits its turn on the crossing with the John Deere G on the other side.

The annual Heritage Festival at Sandstone Estates has become a globally recognised event. This is largely due to the diversity of items that are put through their paces during the eight day extravaganza that took place in May this year, with many international visitors from Australia, New Zealand, England, Germany and even Switzerland

Amazingly some 22 locomotives were steamed during the week, with a very wide variety of interesting consists. Although the railway is central to the event, as it operates over the 26kms of narrow gauge lines, it is nonetheless complemented by traction engines including a Fowler B5 road locomotive crane engine and a Sentinel S4 steam wagon. There is also an impressive and substantial collection of military hardware, as well as a very large and comprehensive cross-section of agricultural tractors and other related machinery that encompasses all makes that were used for farming in South Africa from Fordson, Lanz, Field Marshall, John Deere and many others, including Porsche.

Ex SAR 1913 NG14 1344 Kerr Stuart 4-6-2 side tank, one of seven built to work on the Alfred County Railway from Port Shepstone to Harding line. A full rebuild was given to this 30 ton locomotive in the mid 2000s and it took its turn on the tractor train here.

The IHC W-30 and 1956 400 that was supplied new to SA with the prettiest 4-4-0 narrow gauge tender locomotives you could find. Some 42 were built; these are the survivors of the class. They were built in 1895 for the Beira Railway by Falcon Engine and Car Works Loughborough (later Brush).

More tractors from an IHC 10/20, JD830 and JDAR get caught at the crossing again.

Over many years Janie du Toot, a farmer from the Western Cape, methodically built up a magnificent collection of International Harvester Co products. This large collection is housed in a special building now at Sandstone Estates where it was transferred after Janie retired from his farm to live by the coast. This year, at the specific request of Old Tractor magazine, a large number of these red International tractors were loaded onto flat cars, as they had been in 2006, and were used as part of the freight arrangements behind a number of locomotives throughout the event. On the train the fleet of red machines ranged from W-4, T-20, O-4, Farmall A, AV, W-12 and many more. All over the world, even some 50 years ago now, tractors were delivered by steam and this unique sight was recreated here in South Africa on the 2ft narrow gauge railway.

When the Transnet Heritage Foundation asked the management of Sandstone Estates to assist with the reparation of the 2ft narrow gauge system, after the closure of the Mismark Museum at Natal in April 1998, it became the start of what is now the largest private trust collection of its type in the world today, and that is known as the Sandstone Heritage Trust.

The operating line at Sandstone is situated on the well known arable farm. The highest point of the line is at Velma Halt, 1,644 meters above sea level with the lowest point being Pandora dam at 1,590 metres. The undulating nature of the countryside means that the line makes numerous direction and altitude changes in the journey from Grootdraai to Vailma. The central point is Hoekfontein, which was originally the station building at Kommando Nek on the Bloemfontein to Bethlehem 3ft 6in gauge line (SA standard gauge) and had been moved to a farm where it had become abandoned.

Normally international photographers are very fussy about the train make-up because they like them to be original, and normally tractors on trains are

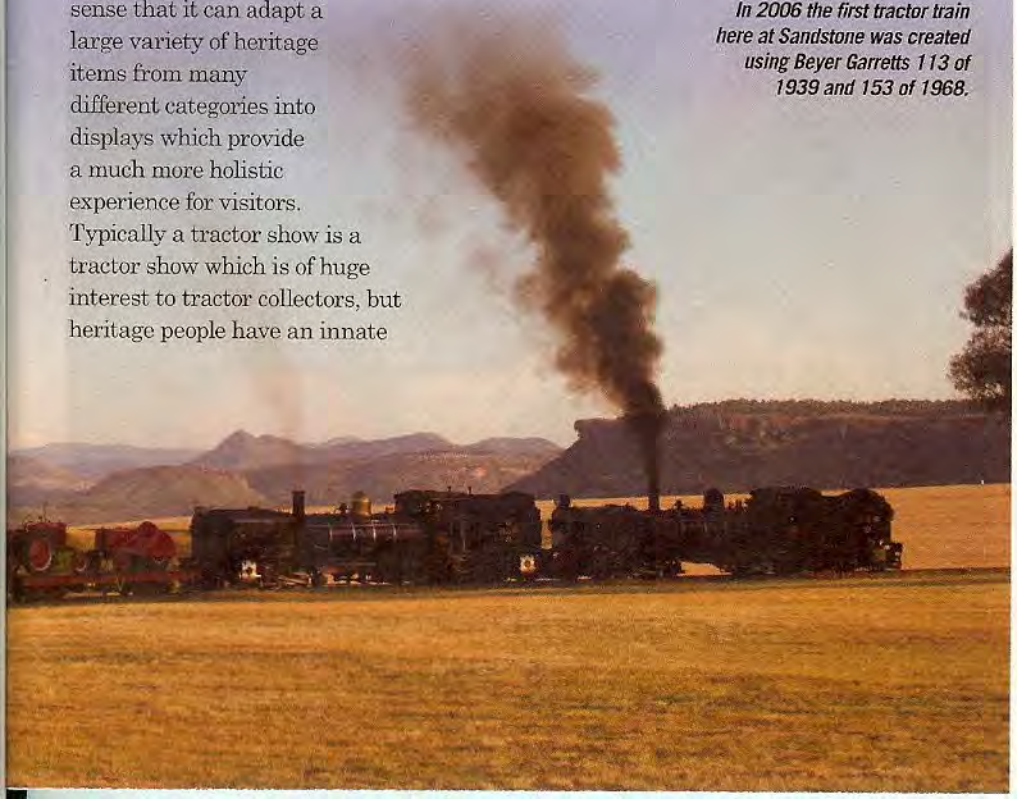
The rough terrain Hyster moves the Super Cub on to the wagon.

considered to be too innovative. However this year, because they looked just right, namely agricultural tractors on a narrow gauge railway in an agricultural setting, there was a change of heart. A number of requests were made to bring them out behind different locomotives for the enjoyment of the photographers.

Loading them was a slow and painstaking job, because obviously they were all fully restored and no one wanted to cause them any damage. However, once settled onto their flat cars they looked the part and they certainly travelled many hundreds of kilometres throughout the week. There was even a request that the tractor freight be attached to the daily passenger train which departed at 15.30pm which covered the entire line with a journey time of two hours each day, including stops.

Sandstone is unique in the sense that it can adapt a large variety of heritage items from many different categories into displays which provide a much more holistic experience for visitors. Typically a tractor show is a tractor show which is of huge interest to tractor collectors, but heritage people have an innate interest in the products of a bygone era and at Sandstone a railway enthusiast can enjoy the locomotive, but there is certainly added value in seeing it pulling freight which is deemed appropriate from a heritage standpoint. Therefore the consist of a tractor train immediately appeals to two different groups of preservationists, each of whom starts to perhaps appreciate the other person's interest a little bit more clearly.

As for the tractor train, that features here a couple of Trust's Beyer Garrett 2-6-2 - 2-6-2 locomotives were at the head end. These are the ultimate heavy haulage narrow gauge locomotive in the world that was so successful operating here in Africa and particularly, in this case, South Africa Railways secondary narrow gauge railway system. The NGG class 13 and 16 locomotives weigh over 61



In 2006 the first tractor train here at Sandstone was created using Beyer Garretts 113 of 1939 and 153 of 1968.

Travelling just a few kilometres from Hoekfontein the tractor train gets up speed on the flatter parts of the track.

Now it's the turn of the orchard 0-4, even more care was needed in the old days a yard crane would be used in most cases.

On goes the Super A, not quite so easy to do with its offset position.

Things do happen on narrow gauge railways and the coupling broke here!

Dusk is setting and with a new coupling in place the train gets set to join up again.

tons and are nearly 49ft (14.9m) long and the example used on the tractor train was the green example NGG 13 number 88 that was built by Cockerill in 1937. It was totally rebuilt by Lukas Nel and his team at the Bloemfortein workshop.

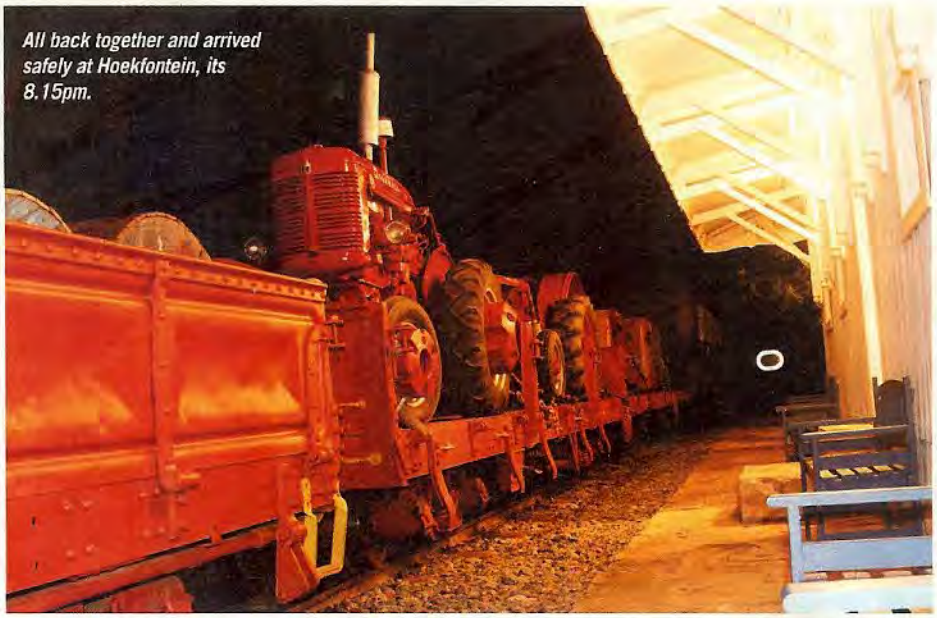
Beyer Garrett locomotives were built right up to 1968 and the Sandstone Trust has a number of these late locomotives here, made at Germiston by Hunslet Taylor. The standard SAR black livered example NGG 16 153 is one of these, the last batch ever built in the world. Interestingly there are a number of former Beyer Garrett SA locomotives in the UK today, operating successfully on the Welsh Highland Railway in North Wales.

One unique feature of this year's Sandstone show was the presence of a Quadcopter. This is a radio controlled helicopter taking pictures of the trains. What an amazing sight to see a small helicopter flying adjacent to the cab of a locomotive throughout the entire duration of a railway trip and in so doing catching wonderful photographs of the crew at work but taken from outside the cab. In addition the aerial photographs of the helicopter following the train provided unforgettable and very unusual video footage.

All this and more has been captured in two new DVD's being produced by Sandstone. One focuses on the steam railway and related items and the other one covers the impressive military collection which was on display this year in association with the South African National Defence Force School of Armour from Bloemfontein. A feature of this collaborative exercise was Sandstone's Mk IV Sherman tank demolishing a derelict house on one of the farms.

Should readers of Old Tractor magazine like to be placed on our mailing list for future updates regarding events etc at Sandstone. please e-mail Joanne West (joannewest@btinternet.com).

Old Tractor would like to thank the many photographers who have provided pictures for this article. All told some 1,000 enthusiasts attended this event, in particular: David Benn, John Lyas, Andrew Scott, Hannes Paling, Gary Barnes, John Nicholas Middleton and Nic Oosthuizen and to anyone we might have forgotten. If there is enough interest P & J Tours are quite willing to organise a trip to South Africa, our last one was in 2006, tel: 01323 833125. Ed.



All back together and arrived safely at Hoekfontein, its 8.15pm.

Off goes 1939 NGG 16 113 with the tractor train all in position.

Guess who went on to fire one of the trains in 2006.

A good number of oxen live here and with practice they still pull the plough.

Already delivered here to its farmer, the Farmall F-20 that was popular in certain parts of South Africa.

Passengers brought in behind the 4-4-0 Lawley could transfer over for the mixed tractor train here.