



Stars of Sandstone

NEWSLETTER NO: II

30TH MARCH - 9TH APRIL 2017

STARS 2017 – THE ESSENCE OF COOPERATION

Our approach to *Stars 2017* is more sophisticated than in previous years. In the past guests have attended and we have only discovered afterwards that many of them had skills, latent or otherwise, that they felt they would like to have shared with us.

A good example of how well it works is our Aviation sector, where a group of Aviation enthusiasts organise themselves in such a way that they manage all the different aspects of operating vintage and classic aircraft from a grass airfield on the Lesotho border. We really like that arrangement because we put in place the infrastructure

and the organisation behind it, but once we have supplied them with all the items on their wish list they essentially run themselves and deal directly with the public regarding flips etc.

We would like to take that model and extend it into all aspects of our operations. The only one that is a bit more complicated is the operation of the Narrow Gauge railway which we would control ourselves using our own management but ably assisted at all levels by drivers, firemen, guards, train controllers etc. drawn from the ranks of the guests. Their qualifications are checked

and authorised by the Rail Safety Regulator and an approved TETA assessor, and they are briefed in detail before the event by the assessor.

It is never too early to put your hand up and tell us that you have an interest or a skill or even straightforward management expertise that we can use. Particularly on our public days, which are 8th and 9th April 2017, we need individuals who can assist us with crowd control, loading of trains etc. This worked out quite successfully this year but we simply approached guests the day before and asked if they would like to assist us. The response was superb and the competence was of a high standard.

We will as time goes on issue a list of skills that are required but before we even do that if you have an interest in participating in the running of the show then why not tell us now. It may seem a little contradictory that we should ask paying guests to assist us but we do so without a conscience because so far everybody who has volunteered has also enjoyed the extra involvement and interaction that has resulted.

So whether it be talking to journalists on our behalf, manning trains, driving tractors, carrying out repairs or simply coordinating a particular aspect of our activities do let us know. If you just want to visit and chill completely and watch the world go by that is also fine by us.

The person to contact is Dave Richardson,
E: daver@sandstone.co.za.



Fire in the hole! A dramatic picture from Rod Hering, Stars 2015.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

Sometimes it is worth stopping and asking oneself why one follows a particular path.

Over the past few years there has been much discussion regarding whether or not the Forth Bridge in Scotland should be made a World Heritage Site. On the 5th July 2015 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the reasons being given for it to be saved is that it is an outstanding example of the superb engineering work carried out during the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Many of these great landmarks like bridges or machines have been demolished or scrapped and continue to disappear. Undoubtedly the same fate would have befallen the Forth Bridge unless it was declared a monument to the Industrial Revolution.

While there are many good examples of preservation in different parts of the world with respect to Railway locomotives, Steam traction engines, Military vehicles and other items, it is not something that one should take for granted in Southern Africa. Undoubtedly there are political and cultural reasons why these items are not considered to be of any great value but that does not mean to say that their validity in the context of the history of the country is less important.

The point made with respect to the Forth Bridge is that it represented a specific era, i.e. it was a physical manifestation of high quality engineering carried out in the days when technology as we currently understand it did not exist.

The fact is that items that were common place 20-30 years ago are disappearing and, unless specific arrangements are made for them to be preserved and protected, they will vanish and these important links to our past will be gone. It is very unlikely that the written word, photographs and documentaries will ever take the place of the real thing.

We are therefore convinced that what we are saving are items not just of interest to the keen enthusiast but also because of the role they played in the era in which they were built and used. This represents something far more significant, in that it shows us where we have come from over the last 150 years with technology. We can provide the sights and sounds that our parents and grandparents found commonplace and provide a perspective of how much technological progress we, as "civilised" humans, have achieved.



The iconic Forth Bridge opened in 1890.

Nevertheless such preservation efforts may be under threat, as this letter to Narrow Gauge World magazine explains:

[Click here for the NGW link](#)



PHOTOGRAPHER'S PARADISE...

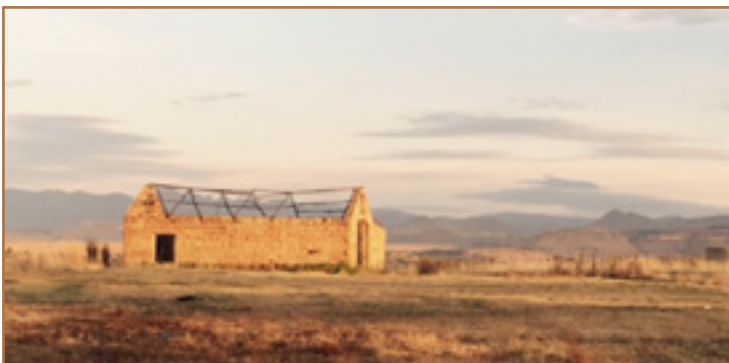


Sandstone isn't only a photographer's dream during our events. The sheer beauty of the surroundings and the daily happenings at the farm provide an endless supply of incredible photos.



Do you want to keep up with our news day-to-day?

Check out Sandstone on [Facebook](#)
(Sandstone Heritage Trust/ Sandstone Estates)
and on [Instagram](#) (@sandstoneinaction)!



Sandstone Rail News

CHANGES TO DRIVER CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

At a recent meeting of the Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) some changes were announced to the certification of safety critical grades, particularly loco crews.

Safety Critical Grades:

Licences (initially for drivers) will be issued by the RSR, phased in from end 2015. These will be issued via on line NIMS system. They will be valid for 24 months. Drivers with current qualifications may apply for the new card type licence for the duration of their current certificates. The RSR has taken cognisance of Sandstone's use of foreign drivers and the application system allows for this. They will need to apply directly to the RSR. As soon as the system is released we will write to all our certificated drivers as they can convert to the new card type as most qualifications are valid until after the 2017 event. The fees were not detailed as yet.

130M STORAGE SHED

Sandstone's 130 meter storage shed has had a huge make over. Earlier this year an extra 2ft line was laid and the 130m shed can now safely house 60 2ft wagons and 16 unrestored locomotives, as well as 12 3'6" coaches and dining cars.



A mixed freight happily chugging through the Free State.

NEW COOPERATION IN THE RAIL PRESERVATION ARENA



David Shepherd's 15F 3052 passes Sekonyela near Sandstone in October 2008.

Picture by Dave Richardson



Sandstone's GMAM 4079 heads towards Tarlton in 2006.

Picture by Dave Richardson

In one of the most progressive moves in the rail preservation arena in South Africa, the Sandstone Heritage Trust, Reefsteamers and Friends of the Rail have announced a cooperation agreement to take them forward in the years to come.

This has commenced with the planned return to service of David Shepherd's celebrity 15F No: 3052 and Sandstone's GMAM No: 4079 after extensive refurbishment at Reefsteamers in the coming months.

[Click here to see the press release](#)

Both Reefsteamers and Friends of The Rail will showcase themselves with public Open Days in 2015 and 2016. Reefsteamers will start the process with their Open Day on Saturday 24th October. Friends of The Rail will be running a train to Cullinan on Sunday 25th October with a proposed Open Day either in late 2015 or early 2016.

Both 3052 and 4079 will be on display on the 24th October at Reefsteamers so that visitors can see the extent of the work being done on the locos. Full details of this event will be announced shortly.

CLASS NGG13 GARRATTS

The forerunner of the world famous Class NGG16, the Class NGG13, together with their Class NGG16 counterparts, are the most powerful 2ft gauge steam locomotives in the world. Of the original 12 examples built by Hanomag in 1928, 11 have survived into preservation. The only one to not survive was No: 59, which was scrapped after an accident on the Estcourt-Weenen line in 1981. Sandstone has two examples in its collection, namely No: 49 and the unrestored No: 58. This latter locomotive is believed to be in excellent condition and a good candidate for restoration.



The sad end for No: 59. Picture courtesy of Garratt Bucher.

Recently we came across this picture by the late Dusty Durrant of the final member of the class, No:83, shunting at Izingolweni on the Port Shepstone to Harding line in September 1966. The locomotive is now preserved at the Berlin Technical Museum befitting its German origin.



NGG13 No: 50 after a repaint from Garratt Bucher in Texas.

We also received a picture of No: 50 from Garratt Bucher at the Hempstead and Northern Railway in Texas after its repaint, and it is not long before it will move again under its own power. Consequently, No: 49 at Sandstone and No: 50 in Texas will be the only working examples in the world of the Class NGG13, albeit some 14 500 kms apart.



Dave Rollins and Graham Black from Australia have been stalwarts of our volunteer loco crews at a number of Stars events.

ANOTHER DINING CAR FOR STARS OF SANDSTONE 2017

Our dining car, No: 198 "Umgeni", situated behind the Waenhuis has proved very popular with our visitors, and for 2017 we will be adding another example to increase the capacity. This will be either No: 215 "Kowie" or 218 "Riet". Both were built by the Birmingham Railway carriage and Wagon Works in England and entered service on the SAR in 1928. Although they were in great condition when we purchased them from The Train Restaurant in Midrand in 2004, time has taken a toll on some of the wood work, which is now being replaced. The picture shows the work on No: 218.



Photo by Leigh Sanders

Rail & Other News

IN SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG'S ORIGINAL PARK STATION... WHAT NOW?

Johannesburg's first railway station, commissioned by the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek and designed by the Dutch architect Jacob Klinkhamer, was manufactured in Rotterdam in 1895. It was brought out to the Transvaal and was re-erected at Park Halt (as Park Station was known at the time) between 1896 and 1897. Park Station was officially renamed the Johannesburg Station in 1913 but is still often referred to as Park Station. A new station building was constructed in 1930. In 1952 the old Park station was dismantled and rebuilt in Esselen Park near Pretoria as a training centre. It was moved back to the Transnet site in Newtown in the early 2000s with plans for it to house a railway museum, but sadly nothing has transpired and it is now threatened with demolition for a housing development.

[Click here for the link to the Star newspaper article pdf files](#)



BETHULIE POWER STATION

A phone call from one of our recent Sandstone visitors helped us unearth a heritage gem at Bethulie in the southern Free State.

The Bethulie Power Station was built in 1937 and powered the town until 1964 when Eskom took over power supply from Bloemfontein. The interior, with its Ruston engines and large generators, has stood in a time warp since then with a local electrician, Danie Griesel, operating as an unofficial caretaker for the equipment. Local residents are now concerned that increasing vandalism will soon lead to the destruction and theft of the machinery.

Sandstone, in conjunction with concerned residents is looking in to the possibility of moving the machinery to safe storage at Sandstone Estates. One concern is though that the building may need to be demolished to release the machinery! Nevertheless it is not impossible to move the building as well and rebuild it in a new location. We will follow developments on this in future Newsletters.



*Below:
One of the two Ruston
engines (a single
cylinder and twin
cylinder version) inside
the Bethulie Power
Station.
Pictures by Lukas Nel*



AROUND THE WORLD

THE LAKE MACQUARIE LIGHT RAILWAY, AUSTRALIA

One of our visitors to *Stars of Sandstone 2015* was Grahame Swanson who owns the Lake Macquarie Light Railway in Toronto, just north of Sydney in Australia. Grahame was passed to drive at Sandstone and achieved one of his ambitions by firing and driving one of our NGG16 Garratts on our Mountain Wanderer train, a somewhat larger locomotive than that used on Grahame's railway. Grahame has vowed to return in 2017 for more Garratt action.

Have a look at the links below for scenes from this impressive 2ft narrow gauge railway down under.

www.lmlr.org.au

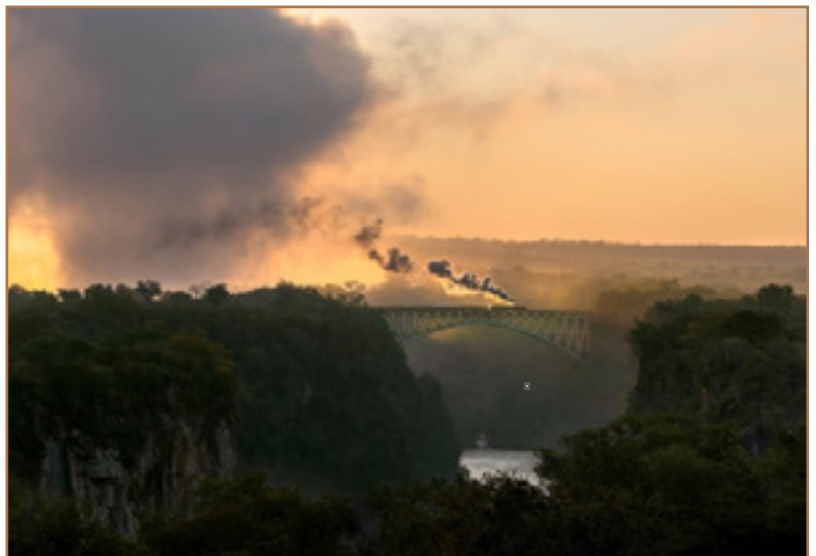
Videos:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAgA-BwQQAM

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rktvK9E2eys



STEAM ON THE ZAMBEZI



Dick Manton sent us this beautiful picture of an NRZ 15th class Garratt on Victoria Falls Bridge. Who says Steam Locomotion doesn't guarantee goose bumps? E-mail us if you would like a high resolution copy or screensaver.

To book on this train you can email: info@steamtraincompany.com

CALLING ALL LADIES!

We have found over the years that many ladies, including wives of Heritage enthusiasts, are finding our *Stars* events to be ever more interesting. Encouraged by this we have a programme for 2017 which involves quite a wide variety of excursions in the Eastern Free State, and in addition provide an opportunity for ladies to act as coordinators, hostesses and guides if they are interested.

We have had tremendous support in the past from the *Stars* ladies who acted as tour guides, crowd control monitors, train assistants and more, bringing calm and order to many situations.

If anyone is interested in being involved in 2017, please do not hesitate to e-mail Dave Richardson (E: daver@sandstone.co.za).



Snow on the Malutis this winter

Classic Vehicles

This beautiful machine is a 1907 International Farmers Buggy. In the dawn of the 20th century, motoring was still in its infancy when this was made by the American farm machinery maker, International Harvester Company, of Akron, Ohio. The car's most striking feature is its tall wheels fitted with solid rubber tyres, and was thus known as a "high wheeler". Basically, it is a standard horse-drawn buggy modified and equipped with a simple motor and transmission.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, other cars were described as toys for the rich, "used for pleasure and not for profit", but the International auto buggy was promoted as a really useful vehicle for station owners, farmers, doctors, and town and country salesmen. It was claimed to be the cheapest car (one third the cost of a conventional car), required much less maintenance, had durable solid rubber tires rather than troublesome pneumatic ones, did not need a chauffeur and could travel through rough,

muddy and rutted country roads which would clog the small wheels of ordinary cars.

One feature the high wheelers had was great ground clearance, as 36 inches easily crossed small obstacles and gave a more comfortable ride compared to the shaking and discomfort of conventional cars of the day. Costing 1 penny per mile for fuel, it was claimed that the International Auto Buggy was much cheaper to run than horses, could cover twice the distance, and that the rear seat could be removed to carry over 350 lb of supplies and equipment.

Production of these auto buggies finished in 1911 and it wasn't long before farmers, doctors, tradesmen and clergymen were



introduced to the famous Model T Ford, two examples of which are in the Sandstone collection.

This example will be seen at the next *Stars of Sandstone* event in 2017 to celebrate its 110th birthday. Sandstone sent it to the UK to participate in the London to Brighton run only to find it was one year too young. The cut-off date is 1906.



After the recent snow on the Malutis, the African Daisies have appeared.

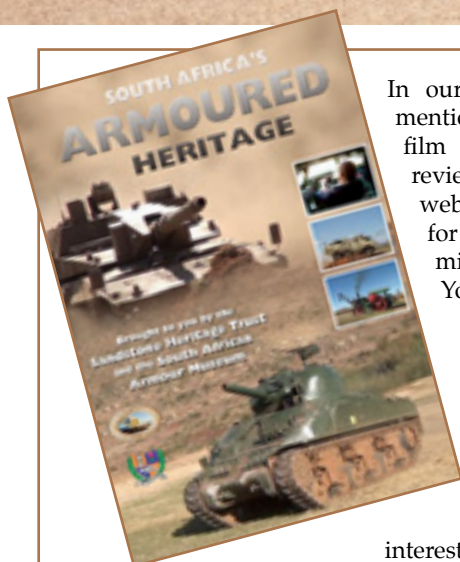
A BIT OF HISTORY...

Massey Harris Model 21 Combine of 1941 belonging to Villiersdorp Veteran Tractor & Engine Club Chairman Eniel Viljoen demonstrates the way this machine helped to feed the world during World War II. Seen at the Field to Loaf Demonstration at Compagnes Drift, Bot River, home of Beaumont Wines, in December 2012.

Photo by David Morris.



Military Matters



In our last Newsletter we mentioned our new Military film production. A full review is on the Sandstone website, [click on the link](#) for a review by respected military journalist, Ian Young.



If you have any interest in military machines, you can order your own copy of the DVD online at www.sandstone-estates.com!

THE MARMON-HERRINGTON MKIV



Since our last Newsletter, Andy Selfe has made great progress with the restoration. You can catch up with the latest news on his blog.

[Click here!](#)

THE T55 TANK

Stars of Sandstone visitors will recall the SA Armour Museum's T55 tank from the Sound of Thunder displays. While it is a museum piece in Bloemfontein, it is still the most widely used operational tank in the world, as the following article shows.

[Click on the link to read more...](#)



Left - A North Vietnamese tank during the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975



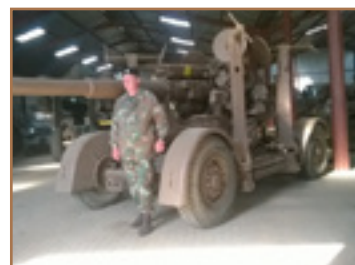
Right - A Syrian T-55 on April 11, 2005

Photos courtesy of 'War is Boring' (see link above)

VISIT BY 1SSB SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

On the 10th July 2015, a group of 1SSB soldiers headed by Col. Fanus Buys came for walking tour. They were amazed to see all the collections of old vehicles, tractors and most importantly, military vehicles. They took a lot of pictures. They were in love with this place saying it's very nice and clean. After their enjoyable walking tour they had a braai at the Waenhuis, and said they will come back again.

Here are some photos!



Photos and story by Alina Halafu - Tour Guide

Sandstone News

WINTER WARMERS

South Africa experienced a particularly cold winter this year, but at Sandstone we made it through with our famous Basotho blankets. We have a small stock for sale which are guaranteed to keep out the winter cold anywhere.

They are priced at **R699** plus VAT. Postage and packing is extra, and can be quoted on order. You can contact Leigh Sanders on email: leighs@sandstone.co.za

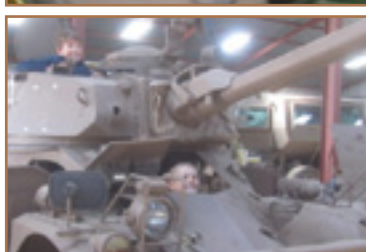


CARITAS COLLEGE VISITS SANDSTONE

*Photos and story by
Alina Halafu
- Tour Guide*



On the 23rd June 2015, Caritas College from Bethlehem visited Sandstone for a walking tour of our heritage collection. The group was comprised of 13 pupils and 3 teachers. They were very happy to see the array of tractors and trains, but when they got into the 'Military Shed' they all went crazy, especially the boys! All they wanted was to drive those army vehicles, and they promised to come back for them in 2017 at our Stars of Sandstone event. Yah indeed they were excited!



SNOW ON THE MALUTIS

If you didn't believe us about the winter, here's proof! Snow fell on the Maluti Mountains near the farm at the end of July.

Visitors to Stars obviously come in April and for those who know the farm they might be interested to have a look at the winter landscape.



Photo by Leigh Sanders

SANDSTONE WALL (MILLION LITRE DAM)

Visitors to Sandstone will remember the large million litre dam towards the end of the camp site. Originally constructed from concrete it has now been clad in a sandstone wall to bring in it line with our policy of sandstone construction wherever possible. Len Hexham and his construction team have been busy with the work and 840 x 50 KG blocks of sandstone have been used to finish the project.



SANDSTONE ON KYKNET!



Sandstone's master engine restorer, Lukas Nel, prepares for his TV interview.

DSTV channel, Kyknet, visited Sandstone recently to shoot a segment for their Kwela programme, touring the facilities and interviewing members of staff.

The show will be broadcast on **DSTV channel 144** on
September 9th at 20h00.



The show is repeated in the following week:

Thursday 14h30

Friday 10h00

Saturday 18h00

Sunday 13h00

Monday at 08h30

Don't miss it!

THE GROENSPAN STORE



This storage area, situated in the main farm complex, is Sandstone's parts department. Here all valuable modern farming equipment parts are held together with railway material varying from number plates to injectors. As Sandstone has collected much redundant material from locomotives and rolling stock over the past 20 years, it was time to implement a revised storage system to make access for parts much simpler and to also neaten up the storage facility. Lilian, who runs the facility was assisted by Lukas Nel in identifying many of the less obvious locomotive parts.

As the photos from Leigh Sanders show, it is a daunting task but Lilian is on top of it!

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Our main complex is huge (20 ha). Because the open plains of the Eastern Free State were traditionally almost treeless, we have been introducing thousands of South African indigenous trees, with a view to creating a type of urban forest environment. Examples include:

<i>Celtis Africana</i>	<i>Rhus Leptodictya</i>
<i>Combretum Erythrophyllum</i>	<i>Leucosedia Searsia</i>
<i>Rhus Lancea</i>	<i>Euclea Crispa</i>
<i>Searsia Pendulina</i> (White Karee)	<i>Acacia Karee</i>
<i>Acacia Erioloba</i>	<i>Olea Africana</i>
<i>Dovyalis Caffra</i>	<i>Searsia Pendulina</i>
<i>Celtis Sinensis</i>	<i>Grewia Occidentalis</i>
<i>Rhamus Prinoides</i>	<i>Ziziphus Mucronata</i>



There has been a staggering change in the ambience of our main complex since we started planting trees 20-years ago. You would never believe that the main complex area started out as a mere field...

Although we prefer indigenous trees we are not averse to planting trees that are attractive and which can survive in the cold winter conditions that the farm experiences. A good example is a donation we received from one of our recent Stars visitors of quite a number of Redwood trees which as people know grow hundreds of feet high.



Any advice or contributions in this regard would be gratefully received.



Our pictures show farm manufactured tree protectors which protect smaller trees planted under the old Pines which have been on the farm for many years. These are coming to the end of their life and so we are making provision for them to be replaced in a natural way.

WILDLIFE AT SANDSTONE



Blesbok on the move...

At Sandstone fencing is minimal apart from our boundary fences demarcating the property and the security fence for the farm complex. This has had a very beneficial effect on wildlife at the farm with Blesbok and Springbok roaming freely. Blesbok are a grasslands species that are found from the Highveld to the Eastern Cape and are only found in South Africa. They were first discovered in the 17th century and were

hunted mercilessly almost to the point of extinction until 1893 when they became protected. There are an estimated 240,000 Blesbok of which 97% are found outside national parks.

Springbok are also a grasslands inhabitant and can be found from Namibia and Botswana as well as the Free State and Klein Karoo in South Africa. They are very nimble

creatures and can reach speeds of up to 100kmh and jump up to four metres high. Their traditional colouring is well known but there are black and white varieties not often seen. There is in fact a white Springbok at Sandstone which has eluded photography.

Although hunted for their skins and meat they are one of the few species of buck where the population is believed to be expanding.



Springbok at rest. Both photos by Leigh Sanders

AN INTERESTING ENTRANCE

Since its inception some 20 years ago Sandstone Heritage Trust has collected hundreds of small items, particularly farm implements from the past. Sheer space restrictions have often precluded displaying many items but now 75 vintage implements have been given a bright coat of paint and form a display along the entrance road to the main complex from the security gate. They provide a bright welcome to Sandstone.



The colourful display at the entrance road to the farm complex. Pictures by Leigh Sanders and Dave Richardson.



Modern Farming

WHEAT PLANTING REPORT



We decided to plant wheat for the first time in some years this season and based on experience from the previous plantings, we decided to plant two different cultivars, one being an all-rounder which we have had good results with in the past called "elands". The second cultivar is a newer "spring" cultivar that has been planted in our area in previous years, as late as 20th August, namely "SST 374".

Apart from planting a later "spring" cultivar, we decided to start planting later, meaning that we started planting when most of the farmers in our area had already finished. Our reasoning for this is that we noticed that our rains are later than those we are generally used to, thus we are trying to synchronise the process such that when the wheat plant needs water the most, we will have rain. If this can be achieved, we should have an above average crop, making the wheat financially viable.

We started planting with the "elands" at 35 kg seed per hectare. Elands is usually planted at 25 kg seed per hectare, but because we planted late we had to lift the planting rate to accommodate warmer days and nights. With warmer days and nights, the plant changes, and a single seed produces less sprouts, hence the planting rate is lifted so that we end up with the same total of plants per hectare in the end.

As it grows, the wheat seed will almost double in size and it becomes soft as it fills up with moisture. When this happens, a reaction is triggered. The seed starts pushing out the plant, and it does not matter which way the seed lies, the plant goes up.

So far the "elands" has shown good germination and a healthy plant population, whilst we still have to wait and see what the results are of the "SST 374". To be continued...



Pictures and report by Des Clarke. [Click here to read the full report.](#)

WORKSHOP REPORT

The workshop on the farm does not just keep the modern farming equipment in running order, we also do work on vintage equipment, namely military vehicles, motor vehicles, trucks and even diesel locomotives.

One of the items we have been working on recently is one of our two Diamond T trucks. The Diamond T's are fitted with General Motors 6-cylinder super-charged 2 stroke diesel engines, which in this case have a habit of "running away". This means that the engine does not stop picking up revs, even if one shuts the engine off. The reason for this is the part that gives it its screaming sound, the super charger. The seals on the super charger have perished due to age and heat, thus the super charger actually sucks the oil

through the seals and pumps it into the engine mixed with air. Due to the high compression ration, the oil ignites and the engine keeps running even though the diesel is shut off. Once we have sourced new seals for the super charger we should have her operational again in no time.

We are also working on a small diesel locomotive also fitted with a General Motors super-charged 2 stroke diesel engine, however this is a two-cylinder model, thus the same adjustments, setting and checks as for the Diamond T are in play here. Due to the loco standing out in the open, its engine has filled up with water causing it not to turn. We have removed the engine, expecting it to be rusted beyond recognition, to our surprise only one cylinder showed signs of water. We filled the cylinder with paraffin and let it stand for a couple of days, and to our amazement the engine turned. The engine is currently stripped and being cleaned so that we can make necessary gaskets to reassemble the engine.

For more stories from the Sandstone workshops, please visit www.sandstone-estates.com



Pictures and report by Des Clarke.

Sandstone in the media

Click on each picture to read the full story!

NARROW GAUGE WORLD



RAILWAYS AFRICA



PILOT'S POST



THE RAILWAY MAGAZINE



LANDBOU WEEKBLAD



LANDBOU WEEKBLAD



SAVTEK NUUSBRIEF



GOLDSMITH GAZETTE



The Stars of Sandstone, our oxen, continue their training with regular work on refuse collection and other chores.



THE SANDSTONE TEAM:
Joanne West - Administration
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Leigh Sanders - Farm Affairs
leighs@sandstone.co.za

Dave Richardson - Event Matters
daver@sandstone.co.za
Hayley Mole - Newsletter Production



Please click here to visit the Sandstone website!