

Steam News From Our Oasis In The Desert Drought Eastern Free State



Sandstone Steam Railway News 18 December 2015



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

- 1.) Walking Tours and Trolley Rides (BSA and Wickham)
- 2.) TZ Cooler Wagon From Port Elizabeth
- 3.) Shipment of exquisite engines and vintage farming equipment.
- 4.) Painting of Shed Floors
- 5.) Gardening
- 6.) Cleaning up of Wagons Shed
- 7.) Cleaning up of Steam Shed back store
- 8.) New Woodwork Shop (Ben)
- 9.) Weeds on railway Line
- 10.) Next Weeks planning



1.Walking Tours and Trolley Rides

During this week we had quite a number of walking tours and 2 Trolley rides to Grootdraai, one with the BSA Railcar and one with Wickham Trolley.



Below Left: The BSA railcar.

Below: Cleaning Crossings Near Grootdraai before departure.



Below Left: Fitting back the tumbler at Grootdraai before each trip



Below: Our special guests visited the ruins of the House at Grootdraai. Spectacular Sandstone wall makes a perfect shot.



We spend some time at Grootdraai, moving the BSA towards all possible Mountain backgrounds for a Photo shoot.

Below: Seun showing our guests the rest of the exquisite exhibits on Sandstone Estates



We also did a trip to Grootdraai with the Wickham Trolley and the Children just loved it!



Below: Anton and kids having a great time.



2. TZ Cooler Wagon From Port Elizabeth

This week Thabiso and Petrus loaded this exquisite TZ cooler wagon in Port Elizabeth and brought it to The Sandstone Steam Railway. This is a dream come true for many of us, we always wanted to have one of these



Special thanks to Mr.Mole, Mike Myers and Dave Richardson for acquiring this wagon after years of negotiations And finally we have it with us. This wagon will jump the line to restoration and will be our first priority to restore It into immaculate condition again.

Cooler wagon in this heat? I am thinking of making a office inside of it :-)



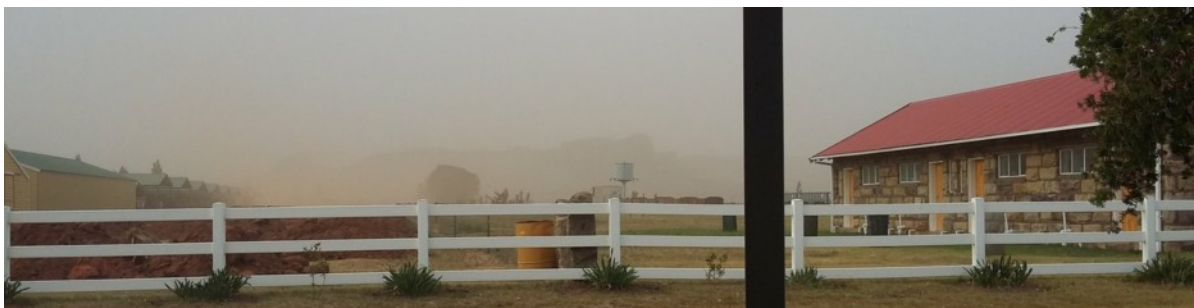
Below: The offloading of the TZ Cooler wagon at Hoekfontein.



Below: Touching the grounds of a safe haven where she will be taken care of.



Below: We used our little Funkey and shunted her into the Wagon Shed, ready to be restored.



3. Shipment of exquisite engines and Vintage Farming Equipment



Thabiso brought another load of exquisite machines and vintage Farming equipment from Bloemfontein and We helped him to offload the low bed and to get everything into the stores.

The Sugar cane wagon wheels also returned from Lukas Nel after the wheels were cut to profile again. These Sugar cane wagons will be assembled very soon and will play a important role in our train trips next year.



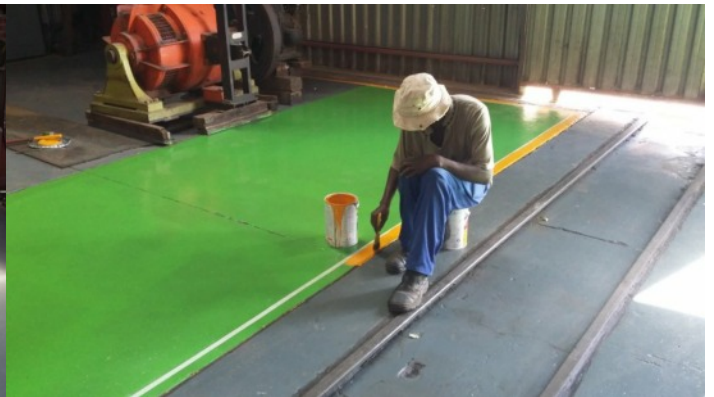
Below left: The Sugar Cane wagon wheels.

Below right: Brand new vacuum pipe couplers and goosenecks for our wagon restorations.



4. Painting Of Shed Floors

This week we continued with the painting of the Shed Floors and only need to clean and paint the pit now.



5. Gardening

Keeping everything green in this extreme heat and dryness is very hard, sprayers running all day!



This week we cut the lawns in front of the shed to keep it neat and presentable to our visitors. Our daily walking Tours are picking up nicely and it is great to see people enjoying themselves between the exquisite collections



Below left: The garden Oasis.



Below: Agnes cutting the lawns.



6. Cleaning Up Wagon Shed

It is this time of the year, festive season and this weeks planning did not went the way I planned it to be.



Most of the Staff is on leave and we only had Agnes, Joseph and Brian since Wednesday and we then Made use of the time to sort out the back of the Wagon and Steam Shed.



We started with the back of the Wagon Shed and moved out most of the stuff to enable us to have space to move.



Outside the sheds we have marked out different places and sorted everything into groups. We cleaned the shelves While we were moving out the stuff, sorted out all the scrap, cables and rail spares and are still busy with it. Another 3 days and the back of the Steam and Wagons Sheds will be sorted, cleaned and organized into display areas.

There are the most beautifully machines in the back of the Wagons Shed and these will displayed with walking Space around them.

Mr.Mole, please forgive me for taking to much time with this, this really is a mess and needs to be super cleaned And presentable at the same time and then I am going to keep it this way. I found very valuable stuff between All this and am moving some to the Groenspan where they will be safe and secure.

There were times this week when I thought we have bitten off more than we can chew but the progress
We made is a reward itself.



Below: We needed Thabiso for 5 minutes just to move out this one item to large for the small Forklift.



Below: The back of the Wagons Shed



Below right: Cleaning continue.



Below right: This exquisite pump was moved to the Steam Shed for cleaning and Display.



Below: Starting to see light in a dark tunnel.



Once all is clean we will be moving the left side machines in the wagon shed into a display area in this shed. The Walkway at the back of the Railway lines will then also be clear so that people can walk around the wagons and locomotives.

7. Cleaning Of The Steam Shed back Store

Below: We tackled both Sheds at once, clearing rubble out and cleaning the shed at the back to be presentable.



We have found many valuable parts and equipment between all the stacks of spares.



Below: Picking up loads of clips laying all over the floors.



This was like a treasure hunt despite only to clean these places up, I found so many spares and sorted it Out as we continued to clear out all. One pile outside is only scrap steal, bits and pieces that will be moved to The scrap heap at the salvage yard.

Below: The photos telling the story!



Below: It felt like a never ending story. The one overhead gantry was broken and first needed to be fixed
Before we could even touch it.



Below: Exquisite Railway Trolleys, all scrap will be removed from them and then they will be restored in
The sideline and placed on display.



On Monday we are going to sweep the back of the Steam Shed and then will move the oil bay into the corner
In the back of the Shed, out of sight. This space where the oil bay is now, will be used for displaying valuable
Items.

Below: A much more clearer picture, the results of all the work starting to come alive.



Below: A Richar Western Trailer to load valuable assets for Groenspan.



On Monday we are going to help Lidian to put up more shelves in Groenspan, then move some shelves for the Tool room
And also offload the valuable spares inside Groenspan.

We have so many dust storms because of the drought here that we continuously must clean the tractors and locos in the sheds. Below: Agnes and Cecilia cleaning the vehicles in the Vintage Shed.



Below: Signboards were taken off and washed outside and then fitted back for display purposes.



Below: Cleaning of Locomotives and between the tracks in the Steam Shed.



Below: The Lawley being polished, the smoke box was graphite treated as well.



When Mike was on the Farm we cleaned the Shed, Locomotives and signboards and it took us about 3 days To complete it. Ben came back to work and started to cut an plain wood while me and Wouter was on track inspection last week. When we got back we found all the locomotives, the floors and display items To be covered in saw dust again, undoing all the cleaning that were done and all looked filthy again so we Had to clean all the locomotives again, wash the floors and signboard that were cleaned.

We then had to find a solution for the woodwork machines not to be used in the Shed because it messed up all 3 days work within half an hour.

8. New Woodwork Shop



We found this store next to the Single quarters and very close to the New Wagon shed. It is practical because Ben now can complete the work on the Dining car (3'6") quicker because he don't need to walk up and down To the Steam Shed to cut and pain wood. The NG wagons that he must rebuild can be shunted into the New Wagon Shed and will be close enough to, same time under cover. We first sorted out the shed inside, packing Everything neatly in the side, then we leveled the ground and Ben paved his working place. This shed is being locked And is right at Wouters window at the single quarters and is near the Security Barracks and on their patrol path To the cattle at nights. All wood from the Steam Shed are now moved to this shed and the Bus will be moved Into the right side roof extension where Ben can finish his part on the Bus before the end of next week.



9. Weeds on the Railway Line

This week Cecilia and Agnes sprayed the weeds in front of the Steam Sheds all the way up to the Silos and Then proceeded to the new storage lines in front of the New Wagon Shed.



Below: A weekend on the Farm and everyone helped to pull out all the Cosmos inside the Mainline Tracks in Hoekfontein Station.



Below: The mainline now clean :-). Now e only need to tackle the Weeds on the Loop lines. The mainline Looked the same as the loop line, mostly Cosmos which is a very pretty flower, so we only cleaned the Cosmos up to the sides of the ballast.



10. Next Weeks Planning

- 1.) To complete cleanup of Wagon and Steam Shed
- 2.) Move Bus to New Woodwork Shop
- 3.) Ben to finish his part on the Bus.
- 4.) Fit rail panels in Shed for Trolley and Coco pan display
- 5.) Remove all Cosmos on loop lines Hoekfontein Station
- 6.) Move Shelves to Steam Shed Tool Room
- 7.) Clean out all lockers with Tools to new Tool Room
- 8.) To Vacuum Steam Shed from dust that can not be removed.
- 9.) To Fit Signboards
- 10) Gardening



**Steam Greetings and A Happy Festive Season
For all!**

**The
Steam Team!**