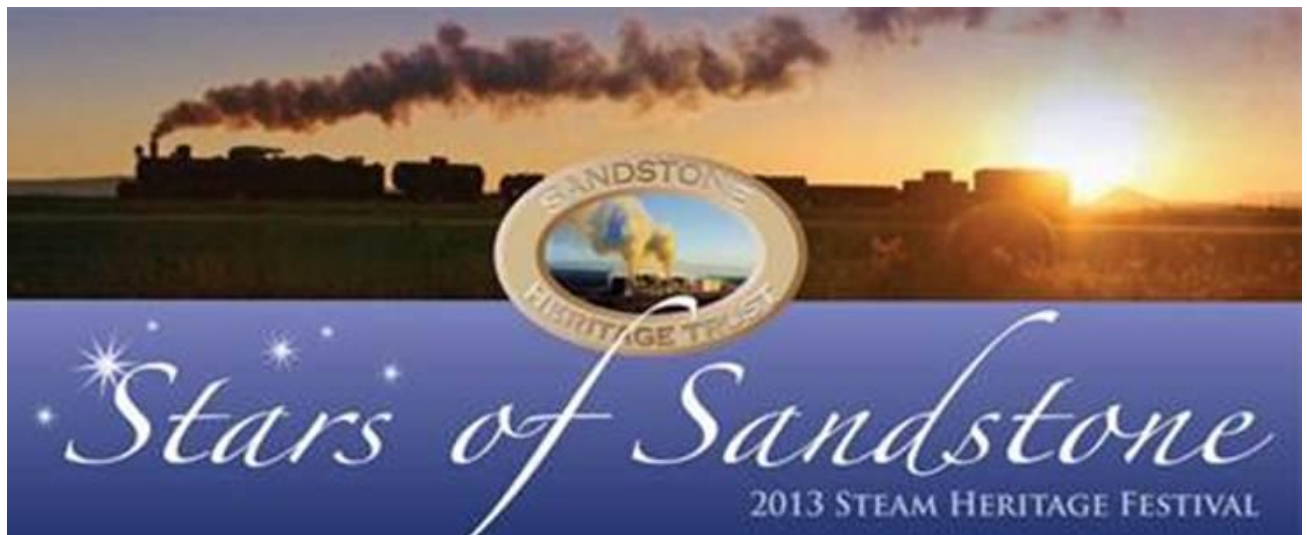




4th - 12th May 2013

1) Improvements to the line.

During the past 12-months we have spent a lot of time and effort on our railway line. Curves have been straightened, gradients have been slightly improved (without removing the excitement factor), and the line has been serviced. A lot of additional ballast has been added.

These photographs show the top of the Vailima bank looking in both directions.



2) Fowler locomotive (Sandy), No 14316.

She is back on the farm fully retubed and ready to go. A touch grubby but that will be sorted out before May.





3) Wagon preparation.

Fresh from having restored and shipped 6 B-Bogies to Welsh Highland Railway, Wouter and his team are cracking on preparing wagons for our May event.



These two AY's are in their new grey livery. The entire AY fleet will be painted this colour to give some continuity to the consists that will undoubtedly be of interest to photographers. I do not think we have ever done all AY consists before.

4) Progress is being made on freight rolling stock.

In the picture below our 3'6" caboose, which has sleeping accommodation for crews, is being repainted.



The second photograph below shows one of our tankers, Serial No XC4036, which is nearly complete and will join the tanker line-up.



5) Military Vehicles at Stars of Sandstone 2013.

Most people associate Sandstone Heritage Trust with the superb collection of Narrow Gauge railway locomotives, rolling stock and the 26km of track snaking its way around the farm. Not so well known is the fact that the Heritage Trust includes a huge collection of tractors and other agricultural equipment, road vehicles, lorries and buses. Yet one of the jewels is the collection of Military Vehicles representing South African Armed Forces since the Second World War. Not only those used by the SA Forces, but also examples of those used by the enemy.

Take for example the Katyusha 'Stalin Organ' Multiple Rocket Launcher, much favoured by the Soviet Forces and much feared by those on the receiving end!



It's not every day that one can see a Sherman tank in operation! These were the Main Battle Tank of the SA Forces during the latter part of WW2 and for many years thereafter. Many older South Africans will remember them from their National Service.



Sandstone's example has been modified as the Israeli Defence Force uprated them, with a Mercedes Benz Twin-turbo V8 diesel engine and Allison gearbox. It has been refurbished during this last year, with a better radiator, to cure the previous overheating problems, and the rollers have been vulcanised:



Some of the mainstays of the Armoured units during the pre-sanctions period were the British Saracen Armoured Personnel Carriers and the Ferret Scout Cars which they were associated with. The Sandstone Heritage Trust includes several examples of both.





Not forgetting the old favourite from the 1960s, the Bedford R, 3-ton 4x4:



When the sanctions took effect, one of the last overseas suppliers were the French, and South Africa was able to source some Panhard Armoured Cars and lost no time in making copies, all the time improving the design. These were later given the name Eland and were fitted with the 90mm DEFA Gun, which had been developed for the French/Algerian campaign, and with a 60mm Breech Loading Mortar. Sandstone has an example of each, although it is unlikely that the 60 will be ready in time.



With sanctions fully in force, South Africa went into full-scale development of its own Armoured and soft-skinned vehicles as well as Artillery which led the world!

Sandstone has examples of the Unimog-based Mine Protected Vehicles, the well-known Buffel and even a Moffel with its large bullet-proof windows.



There are examples of the SAMIL range of soft-skinned vehicles starting with the SAMIL 20:



...to the latest acquisition in the soft-skinned range, which is the SAMIL 50 Gun Tractor:



But the latest to come on to the scene is something really special, the supreme example of South African Armoured Car design, the Ratel (see <http://www.military-today.com/apc/ratel.htm> for more information).



Where in the world can one expect to see all these Military vehicles in one place? And there are more!

An advert has been placed in the UK based Military Machines International publication. We are hoping this will attract Military enthusiasts to our event.

STARS OF SANDSTONE FESTIVAL

4 - 12 MAY 2013

The Sandstone Heritage Trust works closely with South Africa's Armour Museum to operate a collection of vehicles used in South Africa by their defence forces and its enemies between WW11 and the present. The collection includes rocket launchers, tanks, armoured cars, artillery and soft skinned vehicles, all in running order.

Sandstone has ample room to put their outstanding collection through its paces in attractive surroundings. Once a year the Trust opens its doors with a nine day festival that features an impressive array of military hardware, agricultural equipment, vintage cars and a narrow gauge steam railway. Attendance is limited to ensure a quality experience for all participants.





www.sandstone-estates.com

For more information and to book
 Geoff Cooke: geoff@geoffs-trains.com
www.geoffs-trains.com

6) Water tank.

Len and his crew are not messing around.

Plans are afoot to erect this fabulous old water tower in short order. While they are pouring the foundations and letting them settle the old tank will be sandblasted, repaired, and given numerous coats of paint.



7) Sandstone fleeces.

We have ordered some wonderfully warm fleeces with the Sandstone Heritage Trust logo on. Our staff use these identical fleeces to keep warm during the bitterly cold winter in the Eastern Free State. It can get down to minus 9 with extreme wind chill conditions. May shouldn't be that cold but it is certainly not going to be short-sleeve shirt conditions except for the extremely hardy.

If you would like to pre-order a fleece the price is R395 each. You need to e-mail Leigh Sanders at leighs@sandstone.co.za and she will put one aside for you. We did have some on sale last year but they sold out very quickly.

The fleeces are supplied by Jonsson Workwear, South Africa's leading supplier of high quality garments for agriculture and the recreational market.



LONG SLEEVE
FLEECE JACKET



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8) Since when is a weighbridge a thing of beauty?

At Sandstone Estates we like to create the most pleasant environment for our staff and for our customers.

Leigh Sanders and her excellent team of ladies do a great job of looking after the gardens. Many of these ladies are the wives of our top technical and farming personnel which means that we in fact employ two people out of many of the families living on the farm giving them collectively a much higher income. We have in recent months

come to realise that these ladies are extremely competent, versatile, and are really more than capable of giving the men a run for their money.



9) Palm tree.

The Palm tree that was transplanted by our team from the old dismantled house at Vailima has taken to its new surroundings with enthusiasm.

The support will be removed by our Stars event.



10) Vegetarian meals.

We have a very exciting menu for the Stars of Sandstone event this year. We have an abundance of wildlife on the farm at the moment including Springbok and Blesbok. In order to keep the numbers in line with the carrying capacity of the farm we will be reducing these in late April. We will be offering Venison to our guests on a number of occasions for the evening meal.

When booking attendance at the event please confirm your culinary options, i.e. vegetarian etc. The Eastern Free State is renowned for its culinary excellence but it does tend to be meat based.

11) Picture perfect.

We are having spectacular weather on the farm. This picture was taken through the door of the bottom auxiliary Running Shed adjacent to the main workshop.



The Sandstone team

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