



4th - 12th May 2013

1) Cosmos.

We have planted a substantial amount of Cosmos next to the balloon at Grootdraai which we hope and pray will still be in flower by Stars of Sandstone 2013. It is the latest we have ever planted Cosmos and as one can see from this photograph below it is flourishing thanks to late rains. However, the last week or so has been hot and dry so we will just see how things develop.

Cosmos is fairly tough so we expect it will be there in all its glory when the visitors arrive. We are pushing our luck because we have never planted it for May flower but we are optimistic.



2) 2013 Boiler certificates.

As required by the Department of Labour in South Africa, all boilers need to undergo inspection and testing on an annual basis. At Sandstone this is carried out every February. The Steam Team, with the assistance of the Sandstone Bloemfontein Steam Workshops, started preparing the boilers last November and worked tirelessly to ensure that all 27 boilers, which required inspection, were ready. All are now approved.

For further details see: <http://www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/railway-heritage/39-railway-heritage/2864-2013-boiler-certifications>.

3) All day soup bar.



Bear in mind that the event this year is nearly a month later than normal. April can be quite cold but May is colder. It occurs to us that our guests and perhaps our train crews in particular may have occasion to want something to eat in-between meals. Obviously we have a cash bar that sells alcohol and cold drinks from early to late, but some people may opt for something more nutritious. We therefore thought we would add soup to the bar menu. We would serve a different soup every day.

This is relatively simple to implement but we may be getting carried away here. We would appreciate your thoughts on this.

4) New lounge car.

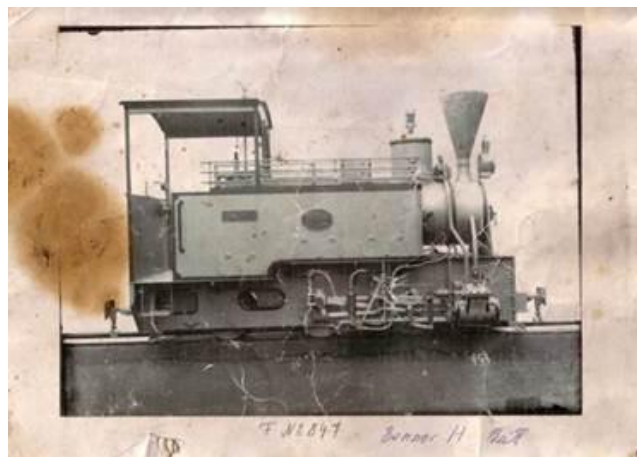
Wouter Jubileus has spent a lot of time on the lounge car which is now in a useable state. We are struggling to find internal fittings for it such as period lights etc. but it will certainly be deployed as appropriate during the event.



5) Arn Jung, No. 847.

This is a locomotive that no one has seen because it was under restoration this time last year and has only just been delivered to the farm by Lukas Nel and his team.

One of our visitors from a previous event managed to locate this picture of the locomotive taken apparently when it left the factory. Lukas said that this is more or less all he had to work on during the restoration. Visitors can judge for themselves as to what a great job he has done.



6) The state of the line.

The weather has struck again and we have one place where the water has gone over the line but has not caused it any major discomfort. We are getting used to flash floods in the Eastern Free State but the rains are pretty much behind us now so we expect the line to be in tip-top condition.



7) Support staff.

We are delighted to advise that the same team who looked after our guests last year, and indeed the year before, are all looking forward to supporting our event.

Selina, Agnes, Cecilia, Jermina, Fezile, and Leigh are all permanent employees of the farm, and although they have other duties these will be put aside so that they are in attendance throughout the event.

We are also delighted to advise that the South African Scouts Association have asked if they can assist, and there will be seven scouts and their Scout Master available throughout the event to ensure that we have all the bases covered in different areas. The objective is that the management of the farm can lounge around shooting the breeze with the guests.



*Standing: Selina Kgomongwe, Agnes Khabele, Cecilia Leemisa, Jermina Khabele
Sitting: Fezile Thwala, Leigh Sanders*

8) **African Steam season confirmed.**

Click here to read the latest newsletter from Geoff's Trains: <http://www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/general-news/2862-african-rail-tour-news>.

9) **Start getting excited.**

A wonderful family from Argentina stopped by and they were certainly excited as you can see below.



The Zapp family



While on the farm the Graham Paige tried a bit of off-roading but had to be rescued by our span of Afrikaner Oxen.

From: THREE AMERICAS [mailto:three_americas@yahoo.com]

Sent: 06 March 2013 07:20

Dear Wilfred!!!

We are so happy still a week after of being in such a place. SANDSTONE!!!!!!
You should not die..... heaven will be so boring for you! You have your own!
We were talking to every one in Clarens, and for sure you will get some people asking you to go in May.
God did bless you, but we will ask him to keep blessing you, so history will remember you!!!
As you are keeping it alive!!!!

Candelaria, Pampa, Tehue, Paloma, Wallaby, and Herman Zapp

For details of this amazing family and their trip around the world in a 1928 Graham Paige motor vehicle click here: www.sparkyourdream.net.

10) Something new.

The large shed which was full of interesting old machinery immediately adjacent to the railway has been cleaned out. Sandstone walls have been built and it is now our main cattle kraal where we over winter the cattle at night.



Our team, headed by Des Clarke, decided the best way to move the Ruston Bucyrus excavator was to start it. We have had it for about 5-years and it is obviously about 70-80 years old. The big old Ruston engine started within 5-minutes so they drove it to its new location. Ruston Bucyrus really built things to last.

We might get it up and running and use it to fill the ballast trucks.

11) Special note to those who attended Kalahari Sunrise event.

We received over 60 e-mails from people making recommendations as to how our events can be improved. Rest assured that we are now going through these in detail and we are going to do our very best to implement all the recommendations.

The Sandstone team

Wilf and Mike.

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