



Thanks to all who responded to newsletter number one. If you would like us to delete you from our newsletter mailing list for Stars of Sandstone 2014 please respond directly to Joanne West (E: joannewest@btinternet.com).



Although the rains were a bit late this year we are pleased that we received 110mm in late October which has enabled us to start planting. We are hoping for a reasonably good rainy season but it is dry at the moment and we are carrying on planting virtually around the clock. Some rain in the next few days would be great.

Arable farming is the revenue engine for the Sandstone Heritage Trust and we are always keen therefore on achieving the best results possible.

Our 22-row South African manufactured Equalizer Planter planting Maize behind a Case 285.

1) Bloemfontein Shed News.

The team recently received their new overalls and for those of you who know nothing about Bloemfontein, its staff, or the work that it does here is a small introduction.



Left to right: Tinus, Manual, Leon, Lukas, Isak, Gertrude, John, Anna, and Simon.



The Avonside, No. 1624, which is targeted for completion by Stars 2014, is well advanced, as you can see from the quick photographic summary below.



Here's some spares recently machined.



Lubricator fabricated in our workshops.

2) Steam Traction Engine section.

This has always been the poor relation to the 2-ft Narrow Gauge Railway. We struggle to find qualified people to drive our traction engines. Our line-up includes a Fowler B5 Crane engine, a Sentinel S4 Steam lorry, a Marshall Colonial tractor, a McLaren Road engine, and our Fowler and Marshall Steam Rollers.

What we are looking for are people who are knowledgeable with regard to traction engines, who have had experience of them, and who would like to prepare them and drive them during the event. If you are not one of those people yourself perhaps you know somebody who is and you can forward this newsletter onto them. The sector supervisor for this is David Rollins in Australia and he can be contacted by e-mail at: pommydaver@optusnet.com.au. He will be working closely with Shawn Spaan from South Africa. Shawn is unfortunately working on a contract at present and will not be available until later in the year but I am sure that David will answer any questions and enter into a dialogue with anyone who is interested in joining this particular group.

People who are interested in both are welcome to allocate days to the traction engines and they can spend other days riding on or getting involved on the 2-ft Narrow Gauge railway.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to our qualified drivers and firemen on the Narrow Gauge Railway to take a day off and drive traction engines. We can actually roster you onto them. We would assume that with your rail locomotive experience that you will make the transition to road steam quite easily but you will have to do this under the supervision of either David or Shawn.



You will notice our wonderful team of Afrikaner oxen in this photograph. We have a special Afrikaner breeding herd and we are trying to get two teams of 14-oxen each operational but we will not make it by next year. We should however have potentially up to 16 oxen in one team. In order to upgrade the quality of our oxen we have recently acquired a new bull whose name is Stalin for reasons that we will describe to our visitors if they choose to ask.



3) Looking spic and span.

The large shed adjacent to the 2-ft Narrow Gauge Running Shed which houses the traction engines and other items has been repainted. Because of the size of these buildings it is an enormous undertaking but we try and do one a year. Visitors will notice the difference.



Wouter Jubileus – a wonderful, quiet, cheerful, and highly competent man.

Wouter and his team also decided to spontaneously improve the cosmetics of the Hornsby Portable Agricultural Engine standing outside. We do not like items standing outside but it is useful to provide a glimpse of what is in the building behind it.

4) Vehicle sharing for next year.

We have a number of people who believe that it may be pointless to rent a car and come down to the event when other people are doing the same. We agree. We are going to publish the names of people who would like to hear from likeminded individuals who might be coming out at approximately the same time and who would like to share transportation arrangements. Obviously up to 4 people could travel in comfort in the average hire car, which makes a tremendous amount of economic sense.

The Stars organisers are also looking at the possibility of arranging mini buses for groups which is another way of getting down to us. The advantage of having a car is one has some flexibility during the event to go out and about and to get to one's accommodation. We are improving the accommodation situation at Sandstone at present but it is a slow process adding accommodation facilities that are not much in demand for most of the year. We also publish a detailed list of B&B's and local establishments and if you would like recommendations we would be happy to provide them. In this regard you can contact Leigh Sanders at leighs@sandstone.co.za or Tel: +27 (0)51933 2235.

Alan Middleditch is keen to hear from anyone interested in sharing transport. He can be contacted on E: alan.middleditch@ntlworld.com or T: +44 (0)1462 624589).

5) Archive photographs.

Ken Livermore from the North British Loco Preservation Group has kindly sent us quite a number of photographs of Narrow Gauge locomotives including some of ours in the days long before we acquired them. The selection below might be of interest to people who have not seen these machines in their natural habitat.



***SAR NGG16 NG85 at Gold Reef City
February 1987***



***SAR NGG16 NG152 stored at Umzinto
February 1990***



***SAR NGG16 NG130 & 110-114-143-111
at Port Shepstone – February 1994***



***SAR NGG16 NG128 & 142-125-151-149
at Port Shepstone – February 1990***



***SAR NGG16 127, 88, 155, 140, 141 (red)
at Port Shepstone – February 1990***



***SAR NG11 NG53 at Humewood Road
February 1990***



***SAR NG4 NG16 at Humewood Road
February 1990***



***SAR NGG16 NG88 at Port Shepstone
February 1990***

6) There is always something new arriving at Sandstone Estates.

Recently we received four magnificently restored Minneapolis Moline tractors. This was part of the collection that represented the life's work of a very talented man by the name of Abrie Rhode who was a longstanding farmer in the Ladybrand district.



These tractors are immaculate and we hope to make a special feature of them during Stars 2014. They might be a little big for putting on 2-ft Narrow Gauge flats but if they fit we will put them on and they will make a significant contribution to some of the photographic opportunities. They will also be exhibited as part of our agricultural machinery section.

The second item to arrive is something that has been made available to us by the SA Armour Museum in Bloemfontein and is a reasonably complete and up-to-scratch Buffel. The Buffels are a legend in the South African Defence Force. The reason that we have asked the Defence Force for one is we intend to convert this one into a diesel tanker for refuelling purposes. At the moment we are using a Samil 50 which is too large for the job and therefore uneconomical.



We are confident that the Buffel will be up and running as part of our Military display next year.

Last but not least is the magnificent Pump Trolley and passenger/goods units which have been beautifully restored by Lukas Nel and his team in Bloemfontein. The history of these Pump Trolleys is that they were used for line maintenance going back well into the 1800's. There are many stories around of men frantically trying to pump their way out of trouble in the African Savannah having been spotted by lions. A team of gangers would go out to work on this combination and of course they would all take turns in providing the motive power. All their tools and bits of pieces, together with themselves, would be on the trailing trolleys. We will be providing ample opportunities for guests at Stars 2014 to have a go. The best part is from the Station back to the Steam Shed because it is all downhill. Lukas has ensured us that the braking mechanism is perfect in all respects.



7) Planting a tree for posterity.

The Sandstone Heritage Trust would like to plant a grove of trees dedicated to the preservation of our heritage. Visitors to Stars of Sandstone 2014 are invited to purchase a tree at a cost of R100 and have their name affixed to it or they can dedicate it to someone special. The trees will be cared for by the Trust and will stand as a reminder to everyone who visits Sandstone of the importance of our history, present and future.

Over and above dedicating the tree you will also be helping Sandstone to continue with its eco policy of greening the Estate.

The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit. - Nelson Henderson



White Stinkwood Celsus Africanis

See: <http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantcd/celtisafrican.htm>.

8) Future restoration projects.



We have five of these original 2-ft Narrow Gauge Ore carrying wagons from Rustenburg Platinum Mines. We are not sure how old they are but they are probably pre-War. We are going to try and restore one and have it ready by Stars 2014. Unfortunately they did not all come with bogies but we can at least restore a few to original condition using their proper bogies.

We recovered these items from SANRASM when the original Board abandoned the site to scrap thieves. We are surprised they survived.

By the time Stars 2014 comes around there should be nothing left outside that could possibly be exposed to the weather in a detrimental way. A good example are these two very interesting and basically complete Guards Vans. We will get around to restoring them in due course but of course they will be allocated space under our big storage shed.



Our gangers are currently laying track to complete the seventh line into the 150-m long wagon storage facility. Three of the lines were 3'6" and four of them are 2-ft Narrow Gauge. 150-m means we have a lot of scope for putting complete consists together and just putting them under cover so that they are protected from the weather.

The rest of the space will be taken up protecting wagons that are vulnerable, such as these wooden bodied Guards Vans.

Apart from completing the storage facility we will be commencing constructing this week of a new passing loop running from a position close to the main Railway Station at Hoekfontein curving back onto the line before the big Oak tree at the Mooihoek end. To achieve this we will be using one of our current storage lines but since we dismantled the 3'6" line adjacent to the 2-ft Narrow Gauge yard we have a prepared track bed which will now be converted into a 2-ft Narrow Gauge storage line for metal only vehicles only, such as B-Bogies, flats, and DZ's.

By having a big, long passing loop it means complete trains, even double headed Garratts with 20 wagons on, can allow a train to pass.

We are running out of track materials but we think we have enough rail and sleepers to complete the above projects because we can use lighter rail on the storage line.

9) Weighbridge Rose garden.

For the many ladies who might be considering coming to Sandstone with their man we would advise that we are making strenuous efforts to ensure that there is a very sublime garden environment awaiting you. We are fortunate in Africa that we have very hardworking staff in the rural areas who understand plants and who enjoy their work. In our case we employ the wives of the professional machine operators etc. This decision 2-years ago has had a dramatic effect on the appearance of our gardens.

Although it might be somewhat enigmatic to see a giant 50-ton rig filled with maize being weighed on a 100-ton weighbridge next to a rose garden it is what we do and any ideas, suggestions, or even plants or packets of seeds will go down very well.





10) Farm trailers.

Many of our machines and items of equipment at the Sandstone Heritage Trust excite our visitors. A great number of items sit somewhere between Heritage and Modern Farming and these two old trailers are a good example. Manufactured from truck chassis from the 1950's era they make excellent hardworking farm trailers which look good in the vintage context but also do a hard day's work if required to do so.

The one with the metal grain hopper was acquired recently from a local farmer. We are taking the hopper off and putting it on a 2-ft Narrow Gauge flat wagon as quite an authentic and useful Narrow Gauge item.

We will not have any consists next year that look anything like those of the past.

By the time the next newsletter comes out the hopper on the one trailer will be mounted on a 2-ft Narrow Gauge flat car and will be ready for Stars 2014.



11) Agricultural machinery.

The Sandstone Heritage Trust has a large collection of agricultural machinery which has not received the attention that it should of in the past. We are trying to rectify this and the first thing we are doing is to group our machines by category. All the tractors in the photographs below are part of our collection of Lanz and John Deere Lanz tractors that have been accumulated over a very long period of time.

When the farm was purchased in 1996 these tractors were the backbone of the agricultural operations and many of them remain in good running order.



Andre, pictured left, is one of our top class technical personnel and he has decided to take this under his wing and will be slowly and methodically sorting through them so that in the end they are all in tip-top running condition.

If there are any visitors to the Sandstone Heritage Trust who have experience of Lanz tractors who would like to become involved or drive them or provide advice on their characteristics we would be delighted to hear from them. We are also in need of spares, particularly flywheel covers and some engine components. Sadly over the years quite a lot of these items have been nicked off these tractors and that is why we have now moved them to a secure location.

12) Stars of Sandstone 2013 DVD.

Frameline's production DVD of our 2013 Stars of Sandstone event is receiving very good acclaim.

The DVD is now available in Blu-Ray and can be ordered as follows:

Anyone wishing to place an order in SA please contact Babita Hira at babitan@sandstone.co.za. Alternatively for those wishing to place an order in the UK or elsewhere please contact Joanne West at joannewest@btinternet.com.

The DVD costs R130 / £10.50 and the Blu-Ray version costs R170 / £13.50. Price includes postage and packing. Anyone wishing to order an NTSC version please add R20 / £1.50 to the cost of the DVD.

13) What people don't always realise.

While the backbone of our Modern Farming operations involves modern equipment we are able to take up the slack at any time by commandeering items from the Heritage collection.



***What is that going in the opposite direction?
Our recently restored John Deere 730D is rolling
a field of recently planted Kikuyu***



***Classic 1940's International Dozer turning compost...
we promise lots more Agricultural Heritage action
next year.***

14) Links and Blogs of interest.

<http://gravehunter-drw.blogspot.com/2011/12/sanrasm-1-year-later.html>
<http://www.geoffs-trains.com/>

Here is a YouTube clip of our Class 25NC, No. 3488, on a very cold morning:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5Wdx-x1jY0>. The footage is not too good because of the mist but really something to see especially battling out of Orange River. Our thanks go to Gert Jubileus for drawing this to our attention.

***The Sandstone team
Wilf and Mike***

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