



1. Train configurations and consists for Stars of Sandstone 2014

We will publish a detailed programme within 10 days. We want people to know in the next week or two what exactly they can expect day by day. As far as Military vehicles, oxen, steam traction engines, vintage and classic cars, and agricultural machinery is concerned it is sorted. However, what is trickier are the train configurations.

Although we have an official overseas photographic tour group this year we have arranged that it will not be a specialised exclusive photographic experience for them as opposed to everyone else. We will have early morning and late afternoon run pasts but everybody who is a specialised photographer interested in attending can participate.

What we are looking for are suggestions regarding the above, i.e. the trains that are photographic specials or freight consists etc. We are also looking for the mix of locomotives and rolling stock bearing in mind that some locomotives have limitations in terms of what they can haul. We are looking for some imagination here in the sense that we want to consider having different freight consists.

Generally speaking the purists do not like to see anything other than DZ's with tarpaulins on them and tankers and fruit wagons. That is fine but we for our own enjoyment like to be a little more imaginative hence we have made the decision (sometimes unpopular) to put things like tractors on flat cars etc. What the steam purists do not understand is there are other types of purists, namely tractor people, who love that so we have to balance all these different preferences.

There is still time for us to physically accumulate items to put onto B-Bogies, DZ's, and flats so if you have any archive photographs of Narrow Gauge freight consists in the past then please let us have them because we can use those as a source of ideas.

The only thing we have difficulty with is timber. Firstly, we do not have access to logs etc. and secondly they tend to be very heavy so there are limitations on how much we can haul over our steep gradients.

Anyway, it is time to stop, think, expand the imagination, and let us know what you have in mind.

The daily passenger train around the circuit will continue to be a feature, mostly double headed because we are expecting more people next year. We are also carrying out civil engineering work on the curve just before the Vailima School to improve the approach to the gradient.

We look forward to hearing from you.



2. Registration for Stars of Sandstone 2014

If you have already made a decision to join us at Stars of Sandstone 2014 it is essential for you to please send in your registration forms as soon as possible to Babita Hira at babitan@sandstone.co.za or you can fax it to +27 11 805 5209. You would have received the registration form with earlier communications from us but in case you missed this further copies can be requested from Babita.

If you have any railway related qualifications and wish to assist with railway activities these should be sent in with the registration form in order for us to arrange for your certification.

Also note that due to the event partly taking place over the Easter Weekend accommodation in the surrounding area is being booked up fairly quickly and we suggest that you start looking at booking your accommodation sooner rather than later. A list of accommodation, also sent out previously, can be viewed at: [http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/stories/Where to find us/Accommodation 2012.pdf](http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/stories/Where_to_find_us/Accommodation_2012.pdf).

The attendance registration form can now be accessed live on our web site as follows:
<http://www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/stars-of-sandstone-registration>.

3. Group travel news

We are pleased to advise that Geoff's Trains will be attending our event next year. Details of their participation available at: <http://www.geoffs-trains.com/SouthAfrica/Sandstone14.html>



An early morning photograph taken on a previous Geoff's Trains trip to Sandstone.

4. Delegating responsibility

Since our last newsletter bookings have been strong and people are continuing to display great interest in next year's event.

Our sector manager concept is working extremely well. Basically we are empowering people who have been to Sandstone before to encourage like-minded people to consider coming next year. The superstar in this regard has been Hans Zwets from the Crankhandle Club in Cape Town. Early indications are that more than 60 people are looking to sign up based on Hans' recommendations and presentations.

To build on this success we would like recipients of this newsletter to consider the following:

- A) If you have a mailing list which includes preservationists perhaps you could circulate details of Stars 2014. High or low resolution flyers are available from Joanne West at. joannewest@btinternet.com).
- B) If you are considering coming out from overseas why not bring a group of friends with you so you can organise yourselves on a collective basis? Robin Gibb from Australia, who has been of great assistance to us in the past with regard to our Traction engines in particular, is doing just that and overnight we have gone from a situation where we were going to struggle to deploy all our Steam Traction engines and Steam Rollers etc. to a situation where this will now be completely sorted by this group of enthusiastic Aussies.

We have a limited mailing list but if everybody on our mailing list could consider extending the reach of our publicity to people on their mailing list it can make an enormous difference and we have already seen the results of that.

5. Locomotive Drivers and Firemen... first call

Last year we relied 100% on foreign drivers. There were no South African drivers available to assist us. However this is not very satisfactory because that means we cannot run excursions at any other time of the year. This has now been rectified with the inclusion of two experienced and qualified drivers from South Africa offering their services. The first of these is Les Labuschagne (E: ykl.anaconda@gmail.com) who has driven for Friends of the Rail and most of the other major 3'6" gauge lines in South Africa. Les has handled a number of special charters for us and is very familiar with the line at Sandstone. His experience has been of great assistance to us year to date. The second person is Gert Jubileus (E: gert@compuwizz.co.za) who is very well known to many of you. Gert left us a few years back to set-up his own successful computer business in Bethlehem but he now has the time to make himself available and we have asked him to join us at Stars 2014.

The function of these two experienced drivers will be to act as Driver Inspectors. This means they will be in charge of their own train from time-to-time depending on the drivers we have available but they will also do the certification of drivers upon arrival, and if drivers need some coaching with respect to any aspect of the railway line they will be available. They will also give proper briefings on a daily basis as to what is expected from the crews during the day. Briefings for early morning run past photographic trains will be done the evening before.

Stars 2014 will be different because we will assign the drivers and firemen to every train well in advance of the commencement of the event. This means that the crew planning will be as finite as the locomotive planning. It is obviously early days but we need to know as soon as possible which qualified drivers from overseas will be attending the event so we can begin to build them into the roster. Drivers should not only send us their full qualifications (unless they have already driven at Sandstone in the past, in which case we have those records on file) but they should specify which specific locomotive in our fleet interests them

the most, and if there is no specific locomotive then what category of locomotive interests them. Obviously newly qualified drivers will not necessarily be given control of the big locomotives but we are confident that everyone's needs can be met during the event.

Drivers and firemen planning to attend and who wish to drive or fire should communicate directly with Mike Myers (E: mikem@sandstone.co.za) who is handling all documentation etc. and who is the liaison person between ourselves and Transnet officials who approve foreign licences for use in the Republic of South Africa.

6. Footplate experiences – Steam locomotives

Over the years we have been fairly tolerant of people who have wanted to ride on the footplate but of course the more people who ride on the footplate the more want to ride on it and eventually you end up in a situation where people are disappointed. We will be charging a reasonable footplate experience fee. You can choose your locomotive and the duration of the experience will be one hour. Obviously it is subject to authorisation by the



driver in each case. The tickets will be issued by the Train Controller at Hoekfontein Station. The charge will be R500 for an Hour and a half. Only you and the crew.

If anyone wishes to book in advance they can do so by looking at the programme which we are currently putting together and then securing a footplate ride on a specific locomotive at a specific time. More details to follow.

7. Union Limited Commemoration

Now that most of the Union Limited rolling stock and traction is going to be disposed of and moved into Preservation around the country as a result of the Transnet Heritage locomotive and carriage disposal programme we are pretty much guaranteed that the Union Limited will never run again. In commemoration of this great train we will be calling our 3.30pm around the circuit passenger train the Union Limited Memorial Special with suitable signage.



Specialised groups who wish to be identified with any specific train or locomotive can arrange to have their own headboard placed on the locomotive for a specific photo shoot. Generally we do not like leaving them on the locomotives for the entire event because this lowers the potential of an original picture but special group excursions are welcome to identify with a specific train.

Remember it is also possible to charter a train within the event itself so if there are enough people and they want to identify with a specific train and even make it exclusive this can be arranged. Obviously there might be an extra charge for that. This is something that could appeal to the Corporate sector.

8. Traction engines, steam rollers, Sentinel Steam Lorry, and Agricultural Portable engines

We have had a good response to our request for people with knowledge of these machines to step forward and help us to steam as many as we can at Stars 2014. If you have not been in contact and you have an interest either as a fitter, maintenance person, or driver or fireman please let us know. In the meantime we would like to draw your attention to an interesting link supplied by Thomas Kautzor. See:

<http://www.steamscenes.org.uk/collections/south-africa-steam>.



***Two of our Steam Rollers safe and sound but unlike the two at Stars 2014 unrestored!!
(Picture taken at SANRASM Krugersdorp before the Steam in Action rescue.)***

9. Boiler inspections and loco preparation

We were wondering whether the average visitor to our annual event realises the amount of time and effort that goes into preparing the locomotives. Firstly, in terms of South African regulations every boiler has to be checked annually so our boiler inspectors will be on site for over a week doing that. In addition, because of the number of locos we now steam, it takes our Bloemfontein team 3-months on site to make sure that every locomotive is in tip-top condition. This is interesting because it obviously sets back our restoration programme considerably but we believe that we should use what we have got and not worry unduly about what we is still to be rebuilt. Lukas Nel's teams productive output is still excellent but it has been interesting to see how every year we have to spend more and more time preparing for the event due to the increase in working loco numbers year on year.

The Avonside locomotive, No. 1624, that will be ready and rebuilt for Stars 2014 arrived in very similar condition to the Avonside locomotive ex Hulle's Amatikulu Sugar Estates 0-4-0T, which currently waits its turn. Built by Avonside Engineering, No. 1994, was built in 1928. This is literally all Lukas and his team normally has to work with.



10. Dying to get to the front on time

We are always interested in what consists looked like years ago. In the Military area Gareth Roberts has sent us some interesting pictures. The first picture is an ambulance (Krankenwagen) which is fairly smart. However the average German soldier has to put up with more basic accommodation as long as he can stand up!



***2014 happens to be the 100th Anniversary of the start of the First World War.
Our Brigadalok will be very much in evidence next year.
In fact we will be arranging a lot more joint Steam/Military consists.***

11. Stars of Sandstone 2013 DVD

This DVD is going down very well. A number of reviews are appearing in international publications which are very complimentary. If you have not seen our Stars 2013 DVD why not buy it for yourself for Christmas? The review below appeared in the latest North British Group newsletter...

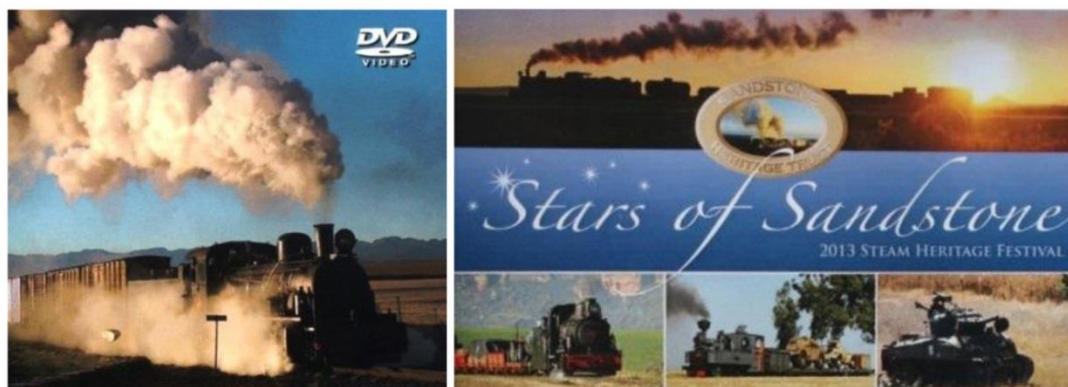
For those of you who have bought a DVD or have had an opportunity to watch it in a group meeting could we have your feedback? Ron Nel and his team at Frameline would really value your inputs.

We have had some interesting constructive comments like "Why can't we have more music", "We would like to see more close-ups of the working motion of the locomotive etc." All understandable and all easy to accommodate. We have already issued a contract to Frameline to produce the 2014 DVD.

If you would like to communicate with Ron Nel direct his e-mail address is:
ron@frameline.co.za.

The DVD is now available in Blu-Ray and NTSC for North America. If you would like to order a copy please contact Babita Hira (E: babitan@sandstone.co.za) or Joanne West (E: joannewest@btinternet.com).

NEW RELEASES FOR YOUR COLLECTION



The latest DVD from South Africa's Sandstone Heritage Trust, '**Stars of Sandstone**' is a top quality film covering their highly successful Steam Heritage Festival which took place in May this year. Beautifully photographed against a backdrop of the Eastern Free State's outstanding scenery in stunning autumn sunlight, the DVD features more than 20 different steam locomotives in action during the 8-day event.

It's not just about steam locos though as Sandstone have also preserved an incredible variety of farming and military vehicles and even aircraft ! These are seen in full operation too and the DVD features an amazing display of the awesome destructive power of Sandstone's MK1V Sherman Tank ! The running time of approximately 50 mins and entertaining commentary make for a hugely enjoyable programme that will interest all the family. This is a great introduction to Sandstone and a must for anyone planning a visit.

The price, including UK post & packing, is £10-50 for the DVD or £13-50 for the film on Blu-ray. For UK orders and enquiries, please Telephone: 01189 819 600, or email : joannewest@btinternet.com Overseas enquiries should be directed to babitan@sandstone.co.za or Telephone : + 27 11 805 4692

12. Dietary requirements

Len Huxham, our Master Chef, who is adept at African Bush cooking in its different forms as well as a Master pudding-maker, has asked if there are any specific dietary requirements he needs to be aware of for next year. Please email Leigh if you have a specific issue with this.

On the subject of Steam and Diets Svatopluk Šlechta from Czechoslovakia sent in this fascinating video of how to cook potatoes quickly and efficiently for large numbers of people. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BxILZtrPWc>. A must see item of interest with a culinary theme.



Sandstone's magnificent ex SAR 1920 pillared Dining Car, No. 198 "Umgeni".

13. Recent events

The SAR Steam Tours stopped by to spend a day on the farm.

NGG16, No. 153, doing its normal day job while Little Bess steps up with an interesting mixed Coco Pan/Passenger consist.





14. Military armour

Whatever your passion you will not fail to be moved by the might (not to mention the Historical significance) of our Military Armour and vehicles in action. Bigger and better in 2014 than ever before!!

* Sherman Tank Flattens Building at Sandstone Estates in 2013 – see:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zldpC_TU8w



15. Archive information available on the web

O&K locomotives - we have lots of them – in fact we cannot remember off hand how many we have but Geoff Pethick has sent us a very interesting set of web sites covering O&K locomotives. See: <http://tinyurl.com/oqhyftk> (click on an image to bring up the full sized version but be prepared to wait as each one is about 500KB. There is a 100% zoom button to enable a good look at details).

In addition, The National Archives (the Public Record Office as was), in London, have recently put a number of photograph sets up on the Flickr Commons website.

Searching through the South Africa set revealed the following individual photos which may be of interest to some, and a sub-set of twelve images showing early narrow gauge activity at Walvis Bay.

A tunnel on the ZASM rack section near Waterval Boven.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/5425153215/in/set-72157625973857418/lightbox/>

A deep rock cutting at Botha's Hill, north-east of Pinetown near Inchanga on the Old Main Road (R103). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/5425931098/in/set-72157625973857418>

'A reversing station on the Drakensberg'. The location is not given. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/5425933572/in/set-72157625973857418>

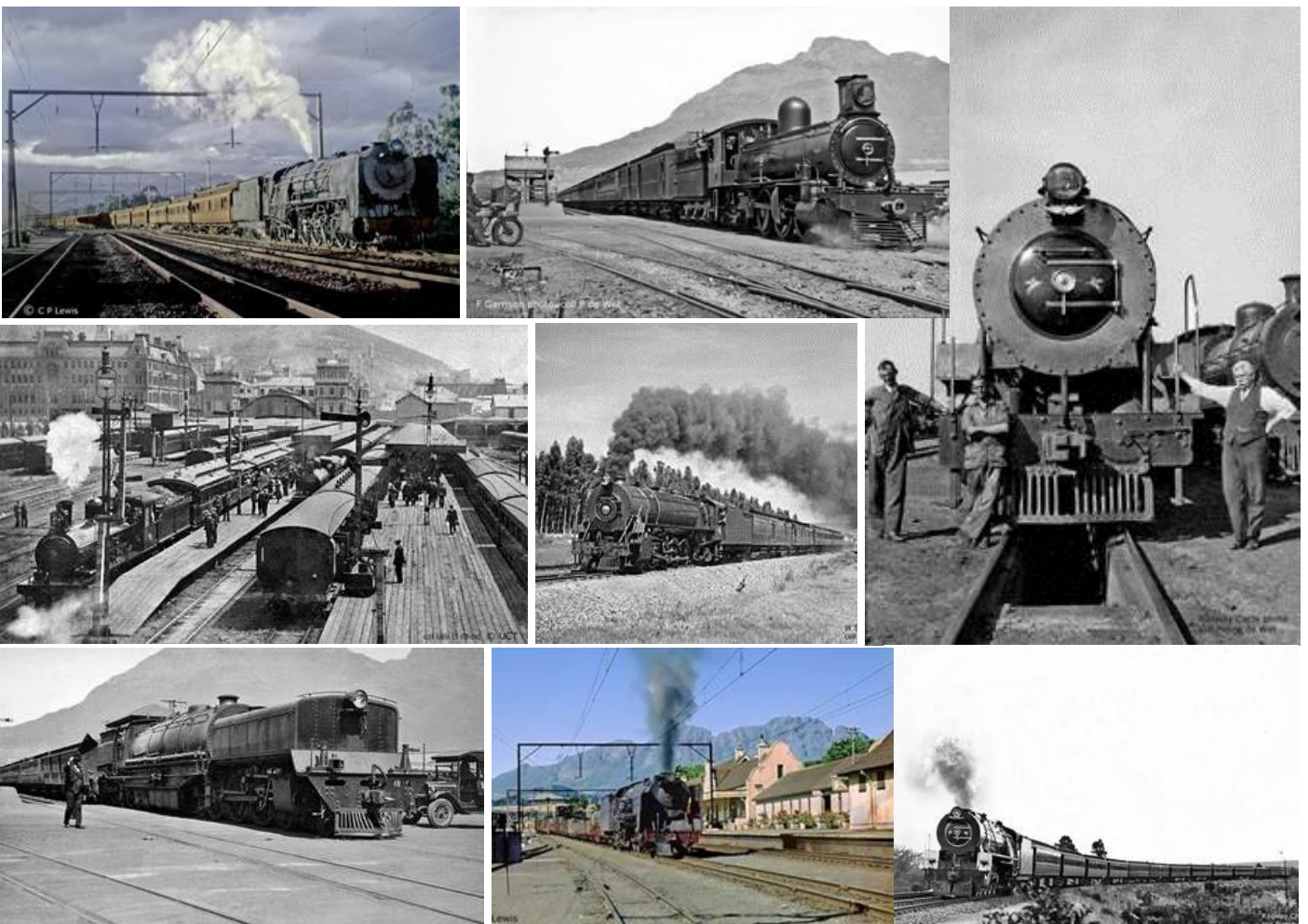
The Walvis Bay set are at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/sets/72157625848762171/>. Click on each image to bring up a larger version.

Derek Walker sent us a link which confirms that things are moving within Transnet with respect to Heritage development. The following link refers: <http://www.heritageportal.co.za/project/transnet-rail-museum>.

We mentioned that there was a programme to collate details of all available locomotives left in South Africa and to try and dispose of them as wisely as possible. This project is being coordinated by Transnet and the South African Heritage Resources Agency. The following link supplied by Gert Jubileus will bring back evocative memories. See: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1240369@N25/pool/page2/>.

We are grateful to Annolien Scholtz of Transnet Engineering for supplying another set of black & white photographs which really capture the mood of the moment in those days.

Thanks to both of them for sending information onto us. Our thanks to the photographers late D. Rhind, Frank Garrison, Pierre de Wet, W. Schutz, C.P. Lewis, and H.L. Pivnic.





16. Links and Blogs of Interest

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2497732/The-iron-harvest-Meet-soldiers-tasked-clearing-hundreds-tonnes-deadly-World-War-I-shells-mines-beneath-fields-Flanders.html>

Bob Baker from Western Australia has sent us details of Whiteman Park in which the Bennett Brook Railway (see: <http://www.bennettbrookrailway.org/>) is located. It is certainly worth a visit and we like the way that they have these specialised preservation programme which co-exist with each other.

Their website is www.bpswa.org. Also at Whiteman Park is the Perth Electric Tramway Society. Their website is www.pets.org.au. To add to the transport theme there is the WA Motor Museum www.motormuseumofwa.asn.au and the tractor museum of WA www.tractormuseumofwa.asn.au.

So as you can see Whiteman Park is the transport heritage capital of West Australia.

We are also in weekly contact with Ferrymead Park in Christchurch, New Zealand which is home to several Preservation Societies, e.g. 3'6" Steam, Diesel and Electric railway, 2' gauge railway, Tramway and Trolleybus, Posts and Telegraphs, Fire-fighting, Aeronautical, rebuilt early settlers' village and the like. If you'd like to be included in their weekly circulation, contact George Welleans (E: jawi@clear.net.nz).



Perhaps our team of trained Afrikaner oxen is a worldwide exclusive at Sandstone?

The Sandstone team

Wilf and Mike