



Stars of Sandstone

12TH - 21ST APRIL 2014 NEWSLETTER 7

STARS OF SANDSTONE

This will be the last newsletter which will be published prior to the Stars 2014 event. If you are contemplating joining us then I guess you will have to move quickly. If you are on the guest list then please make yourself at home, take advantage of all we have to offer, and above all let us know that you are with us. The staff will be wearing green T-shirts with the words STAFF emblazoned on the back. Obviously if the weather is cold then people will have jackets on but they will have name tags on as well.

The loco crews will shortly be notified of their specific assignments, which locomotives they will be driving or firing, and on what date and at what time. What we are still waiting for are people who would like footplate rides to notify us so they can also be allocated a time slot during the period that they are with us.

We would also like to make an initial appeal to all the photographers to do what they did during the Kalahari Sunrise event and that is to supply

us with a complete set of their best pictures. These will be published in CD form together with our Stars of Sandstone 2014 DVD.

Reminder: Visitors wishing to join the professional photographic group should contact David Benn on **E: david@shrinks.co.za** for a copy of the photographic programme.



The South African Olifant (MBT)



The Russian T72 (MBT)

MILITARY UPDATE

There is no question that this year we will have the biggest, most effective, and interesting Military turnout that we have ever been able to put together. This is largely due to the tremendous support from the Armour Museum in Bloemfontein who with their great team of dedicated Officers and other ranks are going out of their way to ensure that visitors to Stars of Sandstone 2014 are not disappointed.

The highlight of the week will be a superb flypast, drive past parade, and ride past Salute to mark the 10th anniversary of the relationship between the SA Armour Museum and the Sandstone Heritage Trust. The Salute will be taken by Brigadier General André Retief.

A huge effort is being made by both parties to make the entire Stars of Sandstone event something to remember. However, the magnum opus will definitely be the parade on Easter Saturday afternoon, 19 April at 16h00.

The Armour Museum will be bringing a State-of-the-art Olifant Main Battle Tank and a Russian T72 Main Battle Tank (MBT's), and a current in service Rooikat Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV). Sandstone's Ratel Infantry Combat Vehicle (ICV) and 35 other Military vehicles will be in the Parade.

As impressive as that is, it is only the beginning. There will be mounted security personnel on horseback, ox wagons with "troops" travelling behind them, and a giant 35-ton B5 Fowler Boer War Traction engine

towing a heavy Military load. On the rail side our 1915 Feldbahn which saw service behind the German lines in the First World War, with appropriate consist, will move past.

To wrap things up a Harvard and a number of aircraft of appropriate vintage will do a flypast. There will be some other surprises as well. All of this will be photographed from the air as well as from the ground. The sights, the sounds, the spectacle and the detail will have the lenses of a world class group of photographers heating up like gun barrels from the number of photographs that they will be taking. All this will take place on our magnificent runway. Whatever you do, do not miss the spectacle – it will almost certainly never be repeated in this format.

Visitors are requested to start gathering at 15h00. Trains will be operating from Hoekfontein Station to take them to the nearby airfield where the parade will take place.



The South African Olifant (MBT)



Sandstone's Mark IV Sherman



Sandstone's Ratel (IFV)



The South African Rooikat 105 (AFV)



Photo credit: Gary Barnes



Sandstone airfield approach

UPDATE ON THE HARVARDS

We are delighted to advise that the Harvard Club will be present on both weekends with their aircraft. This means that people wishing to book flights in a Harvard can do so by contacting Gavin Brown on **E: gavin@watex.co.za**. Obviously Gavin will have to make more detailed arrangements on the spot.

International visitors can make payments via Paypal and local visitors via an EFT. Should you wish to take a flight you can book through Babita Hira via e-mail at **babitan@sandstone.co.za** or Joanne West at **joannewest@btinternet.com**.

The cost of a 20-minute flight is R 2,500.00 plus VAT per flight.

Visitors should note that due to heavy expenses and logistical issues, and also the fact that the Harvard guys have to do other things during the

week, we will not have Harvard flights on Monday 14th, Tuesday 15th, Wednesday 16th, and probably most of Thursday 17th. For the rest of the event Harvards will be active.

We of course will have other visiting aircraft which will be flying and we will also be offering flips as required. If something takes your fancy you just have to talk directly to the pilot, and again we will assist with payment arrangements. We have found from previous experience that it is difficult if there is an in-between coordinator. The pilot needs to be the one that decides when it's the right time to fly and will make his own arrangements to rendezvous with all aspirant wing men.

All Aviation related enquiries should be sent to our coordinator, Andrew Dix (**E: andrew@dix.co.za**).

A QUERY FOR MODELLERS

The Sandstone Heritage Trust 2-ft Narrow Gauge Railway in the Eastern Free State might be an interesting challenge for a talented modeller. It has mountain sections and quite a sophisticated central infrastructure with a shunting yard and major storage facilities. It also operates through a very scenic landscape which will provide a challenging project for modellers to re-create.

If anyone is interested in doing that we will be happy to supply them with anything they need in terms of maps,

diagrams, drawings, photographs etc. To get a good overview modellers should look at purchasing the Stars of Sandstone 2013 DVD available from Babita Hira in SA (E: babitan@sandstone.co.za) and Joanne West in the UK (E: joannewest@btinternet.com).

On the right is a recent high altitude aerial photograph taken of our complex supplied with the compliments of Steve McCurrach of Airserv.

www.airserv.co.za



Talking about our relationship with the modelling community how about this for an interesting response to some information we sent to Andrew Burnham of Continental Modeller in the UK:

"I thought Sandstone WAS a model railway layout, but someone had just forgotten the scale factor!

There are more real locos than many modellers operate, and locos seem to get restored faster than many of us can build kits! But seriously, we can make a 'news' item out of that information.

In terms of modelling, in whatever scale, the major problem is that most

of the wonderful things you have there are not available commercially, as kit or ready-to-run, in any scale.

Andrew Burnham

Editor, Continental Modeller"

Perhaps some of the commercial model makers should get a wake-up.

Staying on the subject of modelling, how about this superb picture of Hannes Paling's (E: japeng@mweb.co.za) newly built 1E.

Please look for Hannes at the event. He is a real Sandstone stalwart and takes the most outstanding photographs.



SANDSTONE FROM THE AIR

Steve McCurrach of Airserv took these great pictures of the farm last week.

We tend to do this annually to check on the status of our crops but Steve so enjoys his work he took pictures of everything that he could find at the end of his very talented lens.

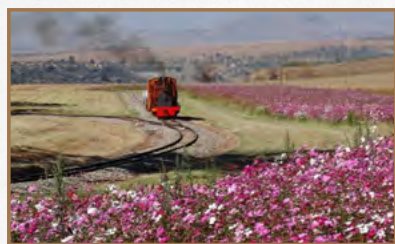


ATTENTION LADIES

We are looking forward to seeing you at the event. We believe that a lot of things will interest you. This year for the first time the media which concentrates on the female market has started to highlight our event.

The following link appears in Fair Lady Magazine:

We have train rides, bird watching tours, modern farming tours, walking tours of the complex, Military vehicle rides, local sightseeing if required, or you can of course just relax in the shade of a tree and watch the trains go by.



UPDATED PROGRAMME

Our programme has been updated. A late change has been the inclusion of a tour of all the Heritage buildings in the main complex leaving at 09h30 every morning from the Waenhuis. People can either walk or they can travel behind one of our vintage tractors on a specially designed transportation trailer. Simply gather between the shop and the Waenhuis at 09h30 and jump aboard.

The main highlight of the week has been the inclusion of a big Military Parade and Salute at 16h00 at the runway on Saturday, 19th. This includes aircraft, tanks, both modern and old, the full Military collection, mounted security personnel, Ox Wagons, Boer War Traction engines and other items. This is something

that has probably never been accomplished anywhere in the world at any time before.

To view the programme click here:

Please note the Military Salute on Saturday, 19th April at 16h00.



LOCOMOTIVE AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

Our wonderful team of men under the personal supervision of highly experienced Jantjie Ngozo has been dealing with the fallout from heavy rains back in February. They are ahead of the game, they have carried out nearly all the repairs, and by the time visitors arrive they should be extending one of our storage lines. If you want to talk to real gangers with real knowledge who seem to be capable of doing anything, however onerous the task, then go and talk to Jantjie and the guys. On the right is a picture of them taken a few days ago sorting out some subsidence.



Left to right: Joseph Qabang, Samuel Mphapang, James Mbele, Jantjie Ngozo, Aaron Tshabalala, Samuel Mbele

We could write a whole newsletter just on the work that they have done!

THE WORKS TRAIN

One of the ways that we prepare for the event is to steam a Garratt, put 20 people on board, arm them with all the necessary tools to do the job, and literally clean the line. This means picking up rocks, removing weeds, getting rid of invasive tree species,

and cutting back branches that might endanger passengers.

This picture captures the weather conditions at the farm at the moment which we are likely to endure throughout the event.



LOCOMOTIVE AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS II TRACK, LOCOS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Every locomotive has been steamed and tested by the Bloemfontein technical staff who have been on the farm for the last 8-weeks. Here NGG13, No. 49 is taken through its paces.



Wagons are being shunted, consists are being loaded, and culverts are being repaired and installed. Here our trusty ex Midmar Hunslet goes about its work patiently day in, day out as it has done for years.



Some of the work is not trivial as one can see from this major rail and road culvert that has been installed.



We have miles and miles of grass to cut but our crack team of Mike and Johannes are not letting the grass grow under their tractors as it were!

This is Johannes working alongside the railway for kilometres. This is precision driving because you do not want to hit the sleepers which are only inches away.



Here is Mike below in the thick of it! He did mention to us that he has seen a lot of puff adders and rinkhals snakes in the long grass. However all visitor areas will have short grass and by April the snakes will have started to consider hibernation and will be getting ready to tuck themselves away for the winter. We have a very vibrant wildlife habitat and we are pleased to know that they are going about their business and helping to maintain the balance of nature.



BE CAREFUL OF GROUND SQUIRREL AND MEERKAT HOLES IN THE COMPLEX

We really love our wildlife and we have Ground Squirrels and Meerkats running around all over the place. They are industrious diggers of holes anywhere they feel like it next to the railway lines and on the lawns. We don't want to disturb them so we ask people to be a bit careful where they walk.

You can normally see their burrows clearly because there is a mound of earth next to it.



OUR RELIABLE OXEN

You only have to look at the picture of these magnificent oxen to feel at peace.

We have talked a lot about the state of our roads and railway. You can see from the foreground what we had to deal with but it has dried out and it is beautiful Autumn weather with no undue difficulties being encountered.

There is a really good chance we will also have a team of Nguni oxen

working alongside our Afrikaners. Now that is treat!



COSMOS REPORT

Looking good, changing by the day, and somewhat weather dependent but we do not think our visitors will be disappointed.



NEW ACQUISITIONS

On Friday, 28th March 2014 Thabiso from the farm and Isak from the Bloemfontein workshops, supervised by Lukas Nel, loaded 3 tip-top condition flat wagons from Transnet's Humewood Road depot in Port Elizabeth. These are among the last remaining items from a tender we won some time ago. They were in a difficult location and Transnet kindly offered to shunt them to a more convenient location. We would like to thank them for that.

Port Elizabeth is approximately 900 kms from Sandstone Estates.



THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW, EX AFRICA SEMPER ALIQUID NOVI!

There are some wonderful old bits of equipment arriving on the farm to participate in the event. This tractor drawn firefighting unit which is more than 50-years old comes with its own Massey Ferguson 35 and is an effective way with dealing with small fires.

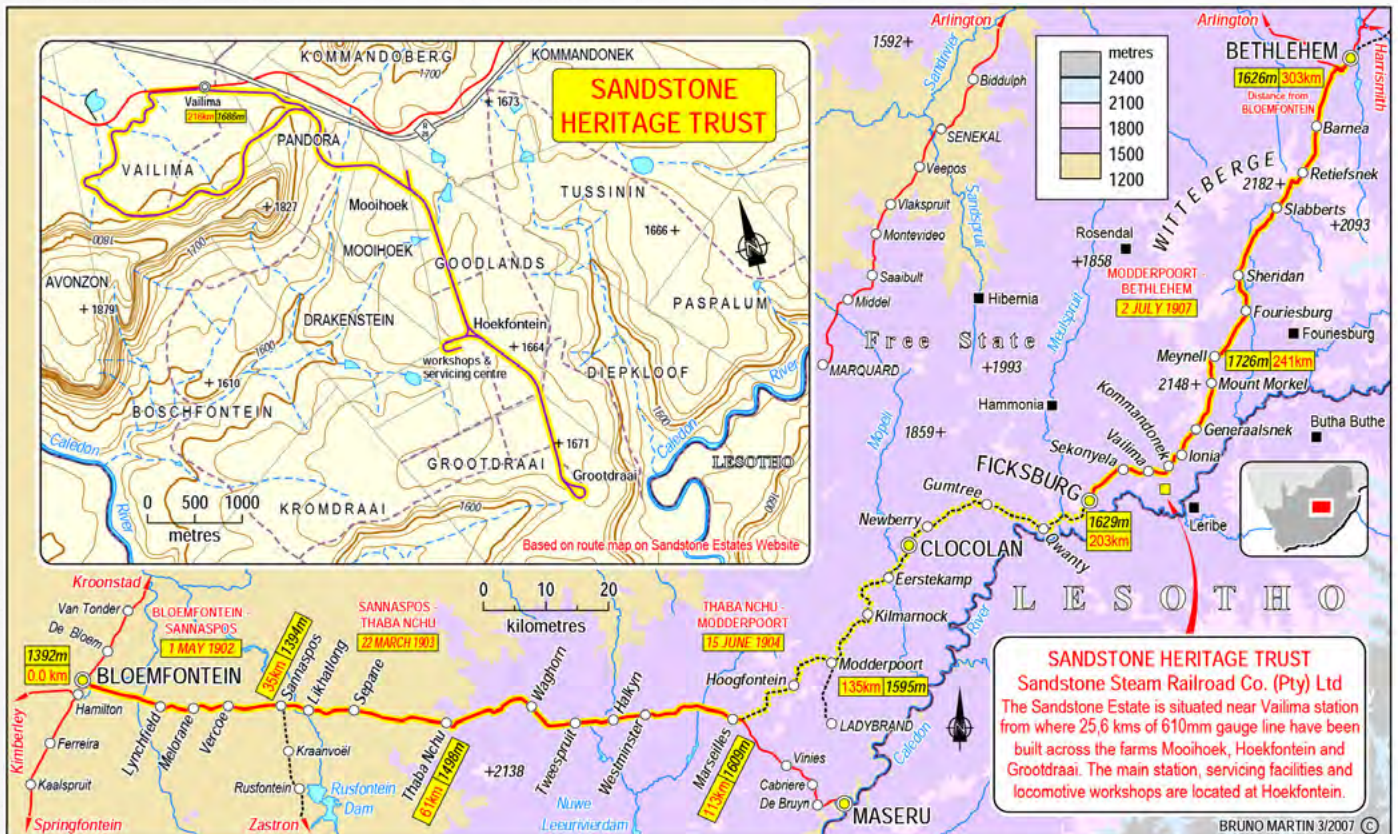
Of even more interest is this unique unrestored 1935 Ford V8 original bakkie that is completely unchanged since

it was bought by the Pieterse family back from Escourt Natal in the 1930's. It was passed on by the original owner to his son Dennis who unfortunately died in an accident about 15-years ago. His daughter passed it onto Sandstone Estates. It is completely original, absolutely genuine, 100% operational, and has only been in the ownership of two parties since it was supplied new in 1935.



HOW TO FIND US

Here is a map showing how to find us and also a large scale map of the railway.



Our thanks to Bruno Martin for producing this guide.

SANDSTONE HERITAGE TRUST 2FT NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY AND 3'6" GAUGE. VISITORS GUIDE - THE SANDSTONE RAILWAY SYSTEM

The operating line at Sandstone comprises 25,6 kms of route mileage with 15,7 kms of track mileage stretching from Grootdraai at its southernmost point to Vailima Siding, its most northerly point. In addition there are some approximately 2,5 kms of sidings plus a spur of 750 metres from the Hoekfontein Triangle to the locomotive workshops. A further branch of some 1,6 kms is planned from south of the Hoekfontein Triangle heading south west to the main farm dam where picnic facilities will be established.

The line is at its highest point at Vailima Halt, being 1644 metres above sea level with the lowest point being Pandora Dam at 1590 metres. As can be seen from the map, the undulating nature of the countryside means that the line makes numerous direction and altitude changes in the journey from Grootdraai to Vailima.

The central point of the line is the restored station at Hoekfontein. Originally the station building at Kommando Nek on the Bloemfontein to Bethlehem line, this structure was found abandoned on a local farm and re-erected in its former glory at Hoekfontein. It comprises two rooms, one of which is used as a hospitality/meeting area, while the smaller room, complete with its ticket office window provides a similar, smaller facility. The line is double tracked here and a canopy has been added on both sides of the building for weather protection.

A ROUND TRIP ON THE LINE

Starting our journey from Hoekfontein at 1600 metres above sea level, we head towards Grootdraai in a southeasterly direction and climb up to 1614 metres to the level crossing at the Sandstone Airstrip. As we depart the station we pass the turning triangle on our right with its ashpit and water column with the line to the workshops heading past the silos. As the line becomes a single track the vintage and modern machinery sheds can be seen on the right hand side. Just past these sheds is the trackbed for the new dam extension. We travel on through the agricultural lands on either side of the line, the location of the famous Great 400 event in 2002, with the gradient here being 1 in 71 at its steepest. After the level crossing we swing due south and drop down on a 1 in 44 grade to the balloon at Grootdraai. Running around the balloon our train will storm up the 1 in 44 and back to Hoekfontein in a northerly direction.

We head back through the picturesque station and across the level crossing where the main farm office complex can be seen on the left as well as the Waenhuis entertainment area and shop. On the right hand side is a section of 3'6" gauge track where a number of coaches are parked including the ex Midrand restaurant stock and private saloons numbers 26 and 32. This consist is headed by the 10CR locomotive number 771. Behind this display are the camping grounds and ablution block.

We pass through some extensive sidings before the line is singled again as we pass the sidings water column and head over the level crossing with its impressive semaphore signals. Dropping down from the level track we descend on the 1 in 38 to 1595 metres by the dam, 1,2 kms from Hoekfontein, with the main farm road running parallel to us on the left. This section of the track runs directly north. We now climb again towards Mooihoek (1608 metres) on a 1 in 38 grade passing the short Mooihoek branch on our right some 2,5 kms from Hoekfontein before swinging north west for the descent to the Pandora Dam and road crossing. This being the lowest point on the system at 1590 metres, 1,2 kms from Mooihoek. Directly ahead is the breathtaking Sandstone Mountain.

After traversing the road crossing we attack the fearsome climb towards Pandora Junction swinging due north with the Pandora Farm complex on our left. The gradient here steepens to 1 in 22 in places. After cresting the summit at 1628 metres we drift down to Pandora Junction in a westerly direction on a 1 in 27 gradient, 4,5 kms from Mooihoek, 7,0 kms from Hoekfontein. Passing the junction we head towards Vailima Siding (1608 metres) with the Spoornet 3'6" line on our right. We have now travelled some 8,3 kms from Hoekfontein. We are still running in farmland and the main road to Fouriesburg can be seen on the other side of the main line.



Vailima Siding is equipped with a water column and ashpit together with a short spur leading to a load dock for loading and offloading of 2ft gauge machinery to and from road transport. In the shed on the left are stored a number of 19D 3'6" locomotives, ex Lorraine Gold Mine.

We leave Vailima Siding in a westerly direction with the distinctive Seykonyela mountain directly in front of us. The line now begins the twisting route and climb towards Vailima Halt at 1644 metres, the highest point on the line. After some severe S-curves avoiding the wheat lands and vleis on our right we make a 180 degree turn through the Bluegum trees some 2,5 kms from the siding and attack the fiercest climb on the line. As we curve back eastwards the farm village and school are passed on the right and then we dig in for the final 1 in 20 climb to Vailima Halt, 10,7 kms by rail from Hoekfontein. As we pull into the halt, Vailima Siding can be seen below us on the left hand side.

This part of Sandstone Estates was originally a fruit farm and many of the orchards can still be seen. The original farm house nestles on the hill to the right hand side of us in the shadow of the Sandstone Mountain, the other side of which we passed on the climb from Pandora.

Although facing east as we travel through the orchards with the Sandstone Mountain on our right, we soon turn north to begin the descent and 1 in 22 downgrade to

Pandora Junction, 1,8 kms from Vailima Halt and after a 12,5 km trip from Hoekfontein. Here we head east again and begin the return journey to Hoekfontein having travelled a total of 25,6 kms on reaching the station and journey's end.

ROUTE MILEAGE

Hoekfontein to Grootdraai Balloon, 2,6 kms

Grootdraai Balloon, 6 km

Grootdraai Balloon to Hoekfontein, 2,6 kms

Hoekfontein to Mooihoek Points, 2,5 kms

Mooihoek Points to Vailima Siding, 5,8 kms

Vailima Siding to Vailima Halt, 2,4 kms

Vailima Halt to Pandora Junction, 1,8 kms

Pandora Junction to Mooihoek, 4,8 kms

Mooihoek to Hoekfontein, 2,5 kms

Total Route Mileage, 25,6 kms

SIDINGS AND BRANCHES

Mooihoek Siding, 4 km

Hoekfontein Triangle to Locomotive Depot, 75 km

Sidings and Storage, 2 kms

Grand Total , 28,75 kms

LINE ELEVATION (ABOVE SEA LEVEL)

Grootdraai, 1605 metres

Hoekfontein, 1600 metres

Dam, 1595 metres

Mooihoek, 1608 metres

Pandora Dam, 1590 metres

Summit of Pandora Climb, 1628 metres

Pandora Junction, 1618 metres

Vailima Siding, 1608 metres

Vailima Halt, 1644 metres

OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Sandstone rail system, although a private railway, falls under the auspices of the South African Railway Safety Regulator, as do all other operators of 2ft gauge or larger gauges. The railway operates under a Railway Safety Permit issued by that authority. The permit covers all aspects of safe rail operation and the Regulator, as part of the issued permit, has approved Sandstone's Safety Management System.

Day to day operations fall under the management of the Locomotive Foreman and when an engine is required for work, it generally operates under the "one engine in steam" principle. Simply put, with only one engine operating there is no chance of a collision. On major events where there may be up to four or five locomotives in use, each one, via its driver, is controlled by two-way radio from a central point at Hoekfontein. In this instance a Train Controller has overall command of all train movements. Future developments are in the planning stage whereby all train movements will be controlled by semaphore signals.

We have talked about the railway line and what it comprises. Although this summary was written some time ago it is very accurate.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will go out of our way to make sure that health and safety requirements are being met. We will have three highly mobile firefighting appliances operating throughout the event positioned at strategic points along the railway. Our somewhat ancient but reliable Unimog which is well known to previous visitors had a gearbox hiccup but the guys have taken the extremely complicated

gearbox out, stripped it, overhauled it, repaired it, and put it back in place, and it is now fully operational. On the right is a picture of Andre working on it in our workshops.

First Aid wise we have a very competent ambulance crew available on site with all the right equipment to deal with any eventuality. Please remember that safety is everybody's responsibility.



DON'T FORGET THE DIESELS

Please do not forget the diesels. Many people ignore them, others love them, but they are the real backbone to the railway in many ways.

We recently had to remove the torque convertor from our big Bagnall diesel (ex Alfred County Railway) but it is together and we hope it will see reliable service during the event. We always feel our diesels are a little bit overshadowed by the very charismatic steam engines which outnumber them ten to one.



VISIT OUR STEAM WORKSHOPS

We would like to commend our team in the running shed for the pride that they show in their working environment. This is their "Beer Garden" and the place where they stop and eat their sandwiches and drink their tea. You would never see any beer in this beer garden.



OUR SHOP - NEWLY ARRIVED MERCHANDISE AND CLOTHING

Our shop is being restocked with some new very high quality current items. One of the highlights of this year's line-up are our caps which are available with either the Sandstone or the SA Armour Museum logo which will be a big player this year.

In addition our high quality fleeces will keep you warm. These will be available for sale in our shop in all sizes.

It can still get hot during the day in April so you will want a cap and you will want a fleece for the early mornings and late evenings.

ANYONE NEED A LIFT TO SANDSTONE?

Robert and Pat Carter from the USA say they will be arriving in Johannesburg on 5th April, hiring a car, and they would be happy to provide a lift to anyone travelling on the same dates.

They will be departing on the 20th. Please contact Joanne West (joannewest@btinternet.com) if you would like to take them up on their kind offer so we can put you in touch with them.

BASOTHO BLANKETS

The ultimate gift, the ultimate memento of your visit. We are proud and delighted to advise that a consignment of original traditional Basotho blankets have been delivered to the farm. We commissioned Aranda Textile Mills to recommend a design and to manufacture an authentic blanket so that we could all identify with the very meaningful Sotho culture that is all around us.

This is an extremely high quality product made by a company that has been weaving blankets for nearly 100 years.

There are only a limited number available and if visitors would like to reserve one please let us know. The price is R595.00 plus VAT. If you are not attending our event this year you can still order one and we will dispatch it to you but with courier charges added.

Click here to see their website:
www.aranda.co.za



WEATHER CONDITIONS

After the magnificent rains our Steam workshops and the area around them has become a sprokie wêreld (quick Afrikaans translation: fairy tale world). We are enjoying a really magnificent early Autumn. Long may it linger into April.

Cecilia at the Running Shed has done a wonderful job on the gardens this year. We hope that some of these flowers will hold up for the event.

One of the many dams and lakes on the farm. Unfortunately this one is difficult to see from the railway although it does go close by.



A FOOTPLATE EXPERIENCE

There is a big demand for this and as long as we meet certain regulatory criteria we are able to offer a limited number of footplate experiences. We have taken the matter up with the Railway Safety Regulator who are quite likely to be at the event in order to make sure we do not breach any of their regulations. It will be necessary for people to book a footplate experience in advance and documentation will then need to be completed. A safety briefing will take place at the event before riding the footplate can take place.

It is not sufficient just to wander up to the locomotive and ask the driver if you can hop aboard. That is definitely against the regulations!

The cost is R500.00 plus VAT. Anyone wishing to book a footplate experience can do so through Babita Hira

(E: babitan@sandstone.co.za).

Once payment is received documentation will be sent which must be completed and returned before arriving at the event.

CONDUCTED TOURS OF THE ENTIRE MAIN COMPLEX

At 0930 every morning a small tractor with a passenger carrying unit will travel from building to building with a guide who will explain what every building is for.

In the case of vintage items the tractor will either drive through or stop outside the buildings for people to alight and look at the exhibits inside.

Obviously this can be done on foot but we do find that for elderly people it can be a bit tiresome, hence the assisted transport option is available.

The advantage of this programme is that visitors will be given a proper briefing as to what they are looking at, whereas if you go on a self-guided tour there might be questions which you need answered.

SPECKLED SUGAR BEANS

It is likely that we will be harvesting Speckled Sugar Beans during the event, which is a very interesting exercise. In order to provide a job creation project we lift the beans by hand rather than use a mechanical solution.

The picture shows our Bean Processing Plant which might be in operation with its big cleaners, gravity tables, and packing and processing facilities. Our Sandstone Estates sign suffered UV damage and is being painted for the event.



MODERN FARMING ACTIVITIES

Remember that modern farming activities will continue while you are there. The market and the weather waits for no man but all visitors are welcome to join daily tours. Full details will be put up on the blackboard in the Waenhuys the evening before.

[Click here to see our programme.](#)

MODERN FARMING REPORT

Our Soya Beans are turning yellow now and we may have just started harvesting them during the event. The Sunflowers are bigger and later than normal because of the late planting and we doubt if they will be ready for harvesting during the event.

At present we calculate that there are 263,400,000 Soya Bean plants, 21,960,000 Sunflowers, and 51,760,000 Maize plants on the farm. Our guests will have an opportunity to see all the different types of crops from the train.



Maize at Sekonyela



Soya Beans



This will give you some idea of the size of our sunflowers. Don't walk under one – it might fall on you!

THE FARM OFFICE

This will remain open throughout the event from early morning until early evening. There will be someone there on duty to assist you if you would like to get advice on something, deal with an emergency, or just sit quietly and catch up with your administration.

The office landline number is

+27 (0)51933 2235 or

+27 71 658 6970.



UPDATE ON PADDOCK, NATAL

In our previous newsletter we covered the problematic situation at Paddock in Natal. Nerina Skuy, the Chairman of the Heritage Rail Association of South Africa, has sent us the following response to that:

"Paddock situation is that he purchased the five Garratts from Peter Newton and two are being restored for operation (I think it is the same two that were previously operating) – I also know that that one was beyond restoration (only good for spares) and one needed a full restoration (boiler – I think?)."

The coaching stock on site is as follows:

- 1) Rebuilt caboose coaches – Nos. 141, 142 and 143
- 2) Guard Van Nos. 95 and 72 – loaned to Alfred County Railways

(ACR) by PE Apple Express.

- 3) Coach No. 109 (renumbered from No. 88) – loaned to Alfred County Railways (ACR) by PE Apple Express.
- 4) Open Coaches with roof Nos. 7, 8 and 12
- 5) Ex SWA sleeping car (rebuilt) No. 136

The following was not moved to Paddock, but to PCNGR for safekeeping when Port Shepstone was cleared:

- 6) Weenen coach NG10
- 7) Coach No 48 – loaned to Alfred County Railways (ACR) by PE Apple Express.

Some of the coaches were vandalised while at Port Shepstone, where most of the weather damage also took

place. Because of the distance of Paddock from the coast the weather damage has been somewhat halted, but these coaches still need to be put under cover to ensure that they can be restored. I inspected what I could (it was pouring with rain during my visit) and with the exception of 2 or 3 (leaking roofs) most were dry inside.

The other locos on site were stored on behalf of TF and is being addressed by TF.

I am discussing our four coaches with our technical team tomorrow."

We have checked the facts and we believe that while Nerina Skuy is reporting in good faith some of the information she supplied is a touch optimistic. The Sandstone Heritage Trust has offered to be of assistance but as yet our overtures have not received a positive response.

MEDIA

We continue to enjoy good media coverage. On Sunday, 16th March 2014 an interesting article by Paul Ash appeared in The Sunday Times. Paul Ash is the Deputy Editor of The Sunday Times and Editor of the Travel Weekly section and has been a regular visitor to Sandstone over the years. He wrote a very thoughtful and well written article on the Stars of Sandstone event.

[Click here to view the publication](#)

Railways Africa has published an article which deals with some of the costs involved in mounting an event like this. We have had some fairly robust correspondence with people who say that the fees that we charge for this event are a rip-off. In order to reassure them that this is not a profit making exercise we provided them with some financial information on the costs and this found its way into the media, which is fine because it is true and therefore the media can feel free to publish it. That will be a change from some of the stuff that we read!

**Railway Africa
- Sandstone Facts and Figures**

**Railway Africa
- Stars of Sandstone
12 - 21 April**



Sunday Times - Back on the Tracks



Railway Africa - Sandstone Facts and Figures



Railway Africa - Stars of Sandstone 12-21 April

INTERESTING WEB LINKS

We have a very strong contingent coming from the Czech Republic. Svatopluk Šlechta sent us this YouTube clip which is really worth watching.

**Ciernohronska železnica / Waldbahn
in Cierny Balog, Slowakei / Feketegarami
Vasútvonalon**

There are two interesting Narrow Gauge conferences in the United States, one of which is specifically for modellers.



**2014 Kansas City
34th Annual Narrow
Gauge Convention**



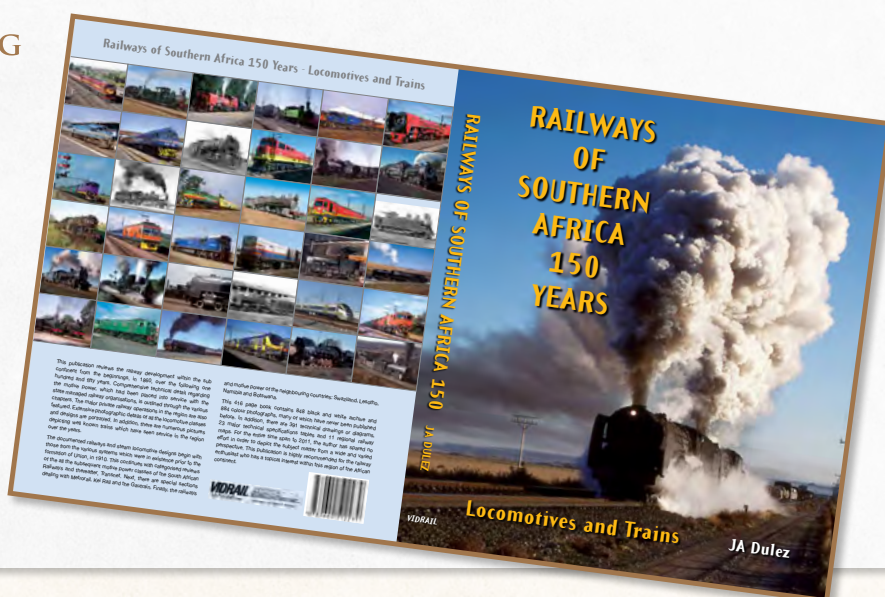
**The 29th Annual Sn3 Symposium
February 27th to March 1st, 2014
Dallas / Fort Worth, Texas**

PUBLICATIONS WORTH NOTING

Jean Dulez has produced a magnificent book *Railways of Southern Africa 150 years*. Copies of Jean's book will be for sale in our shop.

[Click here to read more](#)

Please support our shop which has some interesting merchandise, some wonderful clothing items duly branded either Sandstone Estates, Sandstone Heritage Trust, or the Armour Museum in Bloemfontein. Proceeds go to the local community.



PUBLICATIONS WORTH NOTING

Dennis Moore has released another excellent publication entitled "4-8-4s RULE!". Further information on this title and copies can be ordered from the following web site:

Dennis Moore: 4-8-4s RULE!
(Click here to read more)



INTERESTING WEB LINKS

NEWS 24
WELL-LOVED STEAM
TRAIN TO RETURN?

(Click here to read more)



INTERESTING WEB LINKS STEAM IN SRI-LANKA

One of our visitors, Fabrice Lanoue, has provided us with a fascinating pictorial of Steam in Sri Lanka.

(Click here to read more)



CLOTHING APPEAL

Like last year, we are appealing to our visitors to bring any items of surplus clothing with them for distribution to the local community. Our preference is for ladies and children's garments, and bearing in mind the onset of winter warm clothing would be very welcome. We have 3 villages on the farm and we work hard to support them in many different ways. Please drop the items at the farm office where somebody will be on duty to receive them. A big thank you as well to all those who supported us so generously last year.



LOCO AND WAGON LIST

For the very enthusiastic who like to go in every building and count every locomotive, coach and wagon the link below will take you to a list of all our railway assets. It is pretty accurate and as you will see there is no shortage of items. Don't forget to count the rivets!

Here is just a glimpse of some of the coaches and farm built passenger vehicles that will be in operation.

**Inventory of Locos/Wagons
& Coaches**



OUR MAN MADE FOREST

For those who visit Sandstone regularly they will be delighted at the way in which our man made forest is developing throughout the complex. Are you aware of the value of a tree?



Photo by David Benn

THE FINAL WORD

We hope that you have enjoyed our series of opusculums because collectively that is exactly what it has turned out to be. We appreciate all the feedback. From now on there will be direct communications with visitors in the different categories. For example, if you are an Aviation person then you will receive specific updates relating to your activities and the operating environment that awaits you.

Please make yourself known to us and look out for the hospitality staff

in their green T-shirts. All Military personnel will have identification badges on featuring the SA Armour Museum logo.

Travel safely and we look forward to seeing you soon. If you have any queries please direct them to Joanne West at joannewest@btinternet.com.

Wilf, Mike, Joanne, Leigh, Babita and the Sandstone team



Photo by Hannes Paling



Photo by John Middleton

