



Stars of Sandstone

2ND-12TH APRIL 2015 NEWSLETTER NO:3

STARS OF SANDSTONE 2015

Firstly, a quick update as to what is happening on the farm. We are a little worried about the lack of rain. The farm is extremely dry and the amount of time available to us to plant our 3,000 ha of soya beans, maize, speckled sugar beans, and sunflowers is now compromised. We simply would not have the technical capacity to plant that area by early December when we have to stop planting due to the possible onset of early frosts.

Bearing in mind it has not rained yet we have dropped our overall plantings to 2,000 ha. This has a benefit allowing a third of the farm to be left fallow – never a bad thing in agriculture. Secondly, it also takes into account the fact that there is a massive global over supply of corn and it is likely that our current stocks of maize which remain unsold could still be in the silos this time next year.

Turning to our Stars 2015 event and our Heritage situation in general, the situation

is encouraging. We have had good preliminary bookings for our show next year and we are delighted at how many of our regular visitors are returning once again. They know the farm, they know the routines, and they all have so much to contribute so to them we say welcome back. To those who have never been to see us and who have not experienced what Sandstone has to offer in Autumn, we say please book rather earlier than later so we get a good idea of how best to entertain everybody.

This month we have asked a number of our key players to make their own contributions to the newsletter. We have also asked some of our regular visitors to start adding their voice because they have a unique ability to look at what we do from the outside.

Finally, we have some exceptionally good news in the sense that Coen Pretorius, the Assessor and Moderator, who certifies

locomotive drivers, fireman and train controllers, has recently spent 3-days on the farm assessing our operating staff. Everyone passed with flying colours and a number of our staff have been certified as drivers, firemen, guards etc. When the documentation is to hand we will publish details. We are particularly excited that these staff members will be able to also gain additional practical operating proficiency from the very skilled crews who represent the back bone of Sandstone's annual event from around the world.



Stars of Sandstone 2014
Photo by: Rod Hering

THE SANDSTONE HERITAGE TRUST APPOINTS DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Dave Richardson, who is very well known to many Railway Preservationists around the world and who was very involved in the formation and creation of the Sandstone Steam Railroad, has joined us as Director of Operations. Dave has been a longstanding Railway enthusiast but more as a hobby than as an occupation. Dave, like many people in this business, worked in industry for many years and comes from a marketing background. He has decided that he can make a full-time contribution to Sandstone and therefore will take over responsibility for the following:

Visitor related programmes

The future of our 3'6" Main Line locomotives and what should be done with them.

Liaison with the National Rail parastatal Transnet

Updating our book "The Sandstone Steam Railroad – The First Ten Years". This will be replaced by a very substantial and comprehensive book which covers the entire history of the railroad and brings the asset register up-to-date. We expect this book to be completed by 2016.

Web site

We have a massive web site which needs much closer management and supervision. Dave will address these issues.

Please feel free to liaise with him direct if you have any queries and if you are communicating with the farm please keep him copied on
E: daver@sandstone.co.za.



Dave Richardson, the Sandstone Heritage Trust Director of Operations

MOVING OUR 3'6" LOCO STOCK TO OUR EXTENSIVE STEAM STORAGE SHED

Des Clarke and the rest of the Arable team did an excellent job over winter moving these heavy locomotives from an area near the Running Shed in the open to the afdak next to the main shed. This shed used to be based in Ficksburg and it dates back to the 1990's when there was some optimism that Transnet would allow us to operate on the Bethlehem-Bloemfontein line. After many years of negotiation the department that we were dealing with, namely Link Rail, was shut down which summarily terminated our ability to make progress on this issue. We have quite a large collection of 3'6" locomotives, the principle ones being at Reefsteamers in Germiston. However, the selection of locomotives on the farm is interesting. At least they are all now safe and under cover.

Good security, weather protection, constant maintenance, and an Oleaginous retirement with appropriate periodic care from the workshops is all that is necessary to keep locomotives alive. We offer that at the Sandstone Heritage Trust main complex.

In order from the back of the line the locos are as follows:

Bessinger 9-ton 4W diesel hydraulic. Built 1976 it was delivered new to Kynoch Feeds in Kimberley. It is one of only three 3'6" gauge locos built by this now defunct Johannesburg locomotive manufacturer.

Barclay 0-6-0T 976/ 1903. This locomotive is one of three surviving Transvaal & Delagoa Bay Collieries locomotives. It ended its working life in Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg as Union Steel Corporation No 2.

Ex SAR 16CR no 821/St Helena Gold Mine No: 1 4-6-2 North British, Glasgow 21717/1919

Ex Sena Sugar No 6 0-6-0T Peckett 2141/1954

Ex Sena Sugar No 7 0-6-0T Peckett 2165/1958

These two locomotives are virtually identical although No 7 has welded tanks as against the riveted ones of No 6. No 7 was the last steam locomotive ever built by Peckett and Sons of Bristol.

Ex Rand Water Board No 1 Hunslet 0-8-0T 60510/1938

Ex Rand Water Board No 2 Hunslet 0-8-0T 61035/1946

Both of the Hunslet "Nigerian" type, these locomotives originally worked at the Zwartkoppies pumping station in the south of Johannesburg.

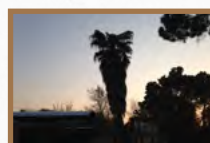
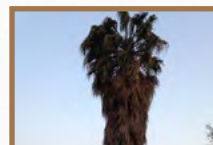
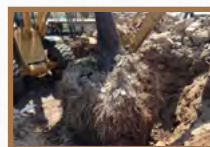
Ex Simmer & Jack Mine No 6 North British 2-6-2T 26242/1948. A unique locomotive as most North British tanks supplied to

South Africa were of the 4-8-2T or 4-8-4T type. No 6 is one of the few survivors of the 2-6-2T type.

Ex Simmer & Jack Mine No3 Porter 2-6-2T 2443/1902. This is the last survivor of three Porters that worked on the mine and the only surviving Porter conventional locomotive in South Africa.

Ex Union Steel Corporation No 3 Peckett 0-4-0ST 1731/1927. This is a type W6 shunting locomotive and was subject to an aborted restoration many years ago. It was acquired together with the Barclay tank.

Talking about moving things, Des and his team also moved a big Palm tree which was on one of our outlying farms. It is not a straight Palm so it has some character. It is now located outside the Waenhuis. Hold thumbs that it adapts to this rather brutal move and change in its circumstances.



2015 PROGRAMME

Once again we will publish a detailed programme of the trains that will be operating but next year we will actually insert the crew details into the programme so there will be no confusion as to who will be on duty.

This gives us an opportunity to plan it better and to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to drive who is expecting to drive, and those crews that normally carry the biggest burden of keeping the train running on time are given time off.



A classic NG scene on the African Savannah. Kalahari NG 15 no 17 on duty

Photo by: Gary Barnes



Photo by: David Benn



Photo by: David Benn

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS, FIREMAN AND TRAIN GUARDS

We always welcome people who would like to assist during Stars of Sandstone. For qualified drivers and fireman coming out to the event the opportunity to drive and fire locomotives adds to the enjoyment of event.

We have begun to receive requests from qualified and certified locomotive drivers and fireman who would like to either drive or fire locomotives at the event. For those who have already applied, your applications are in the process of being evaluated and we will let you know the outcome soon.

For those visitors from overseas, who are qualified train drivers and fireman in their own countries, your qualifications are not automatically acceptable in South Africa. In order to be able to fire or drive

a locomotive in South Africa you need to be certified by a South African Assessor, the requirements for SA certification are as follows:

- We will need copies of all your qualifications and certificates
- A copy of your passport
- A medical evaluation by your doctor which was done not more than 3 months before the date of the application.

You can e-mail this closer to the time but you would need to bring the originals with you. This is to ensure that you are physically fit for the event and to satisfy local requirements.

We can start making applications now using a current medical evaluation but the authorities will need an updated medical

to be done before you come out to SA which again must have been done no longer than 3 months before the event.

All drivers etc. will have to also go through an assessment before being allowed to carry out any train duties. The assessor will be on the farm two days before the event to take everyone through their paces.

Please note that you must first register for the event before we will process your request.

For those drivers and firemen who are based in South Africa and who wish to assist, please send us copies of your certificates and qualifications.

Should you have any questions please contact Mike Myers on mikem@sandstone.co.za.

ASSISTANCE WITH OUR WEB SITE

Our web site is big and it is loaded constantly which means it becomes cumbersome and out-of-date. If there is a retired person, particularly someone with 2-ft Narrow Gauge experience who would like to go through our web site and point out anomalies and suggest which items should be archived, we would appreciate it.

It is not going to happen overnight but our Web Master, who is not a technical person in terms of content, would appreciate some guidelines.

Should you be able to assist us please contact Dave Richardson (E: daver@sandstone.co.za).



OUR DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE FLEET

Many people take the diesels for granted. However, the switch on and go benefit of a diesel is enormous on a railway like ours. Our diesels are all classic locomotives in their own way and represent three specific sizes of Narrow Gauge diesel locomotives.

They are as follows:

Funkey 4WDH Underground locomotive.

Acquired from Impala Platinum, this loco has been rebuilt with an enclosed cab and is used for very light shunting.



Funkey Diesel in good company. Photo by: David Benn

Bagnall, No. 3204, of 1961. 204hp 0-6-0 DM

Originally Rustenburg Platinum Mines No. 11. It was acquired from the Alfred County Railway in Port Shepstone and also rebuilt at Bloemfontein. Two other similar locos were purchased at the same time and it is hoped to restore another example out of the two. Also used for shunting, its power also allows the occasional trip on the system for either freight or passenger workings.



Our Bagnall Diesel – majestic, assured, and old

Hunslet Taylor, No. 6355, of 1964, 0-6-0 DH.

This loco is ex Doornkop Sugar Estates but after the closure of the rail system it was preserved at Midmar Dam. When this museum system was closed it was acquired by Sandstone and rebuilt in Sandstone's workshop in Bloemfontein. Now at Sandstone it is used for shunting. It is Sandstone No. 4.



Our Hunslet doing recovery duty at Port Shepstone before the site was cleared. October 2006.

Photo by: Leon Flynn

OUR BLOEMFONTEIN LOCO SHEDS

For those of you planning to visit Stars 2015 from overseas you may want to consider a visit to our Bloemfontein Loco sheds.

Although most of our staff are on the farm we normally open the workshops for one day. In 2015 it will be on Wednesday, 8th April.

While our NGG 11, No. 52, will not be complete for the 2015 event we will nonetheless have a surprise waiting for our visitors.



Bloemfontein Locomotive NGG11 number 52



Bloemfontein Depot

LINE REPORT

Work on the line continues. We have fitted about a dozen stop blocks to lines that didn't have them. A few of the storage lines have just been completed so the partly completed projects from Stars 2014 are now all resolved. We normally carry out an inspection in November and programme the work from January through to April. Track maintenance is our single biggest expense and we normally have to spend about R300,000 a year on the line to make sure that it 100% safe and useable for our event.



MILITARY MATTERS

Our recently erected Military shed which contains the large items of the collection is now complete and painted.



This year we will have a Military events coordinator. We were a bit worried about the health and safety issues with people riding on the outside of tanks and convoys etc. These things are possible but they need to be properly planned and we need to make sure people are secure. There is obviously limited space in our Mk IV Sherman tank and if people would like to ride in the tank then they do need to make special arrangements. There will be a nominal charge for this to cover the extra diesel cost involved.

The tanks normally join our convoys for a shorter period of time. They are extremely expensive to operate for long periods of time and because of their age, importance, and rarity we do not want to subject them to excessive wear.

If you are interested in riding in our Sherman next year please contact **Mike Myers (E: mikem@sandstone.co.za)**. Rides in all other vehicles are included in your entry fee. These include Ratels, Casspurs, Samil 100 Gun tractors and many other items.

We have a good Military collection but as always in the world there is always something bigger and much more impressive.

Click onto the attached:

Of all the Military vehicles one seeks to collect tanks are the most complex, expensive to operate, and in most cases the most difficult to work on so hats off to the gentleman who put this lot together.

CLASSIC AND VINTAGE CARS

Last year we had amazing support from the Crankhandle Club

There is a lot of activity happening behind the scenes at the moment to put together a programme with a wider variety of vehicles which do such a good job of complementing the trains, agricultural machinery, and which add to the number of photographic opportunities for the many photographers who will be attending.

This year we are encouraging people who actually own and operate classic cars to consider bringing their car with them.

They will be able to capture pictures of their cars in circumstances which are entirely original to the date of manufacture of the vehicle itself.



AVIATION MATTERS

Andrew Dix, our Aviation specialist, has asked us to publish the following information for people planning to fly to Sandstone. We are referring here to the legal requirements for "flights for reward" which must be adhered to. In other words, aircraft like the Harvards and Tiger Moths that take people on flips would adhere to the following:

- 1) The Pilot must ensure that he has a current commercial pilot licence and a rating for the aircraft type involved.
- 2) Passengers will be asked to sign an indemnity form.
- 3) Flights should be 60 minutes duration maximum.
- 4) Flights should take-off and land at the same location, which is known as a 'flip'



Sandstone Cosmos Festival April 2008

O & K 0-4-0WT WORKS NUMBER 12691 OF 1936

This locomotive is in the advanced stages of restoration at our Bloemfontein Workshops, and for those who are interested in the background and detail regarding our locomotives here is a detailed summary of its history prepared by Dave Richardson.

This locomotive is the last survivor of a trio of the Orenstein & Koppel 60 hp 0-4-0WT type delivered between 1935 and 1937 to the New Machavie mine near Klerksdorp in the North West Province of South Africa. WT denoting that the water for the locomotive is carried in a "well" tank below the boiler and between the frames. The first locomotive (no: 12689)

was delivered in 1935, no: 12691 in 1936 and the final example (no: 12993) in 1937. The New Machavie Mine closed in 1945 and the loco was sold to Dominion Reefs Mine, also near Klerksdorp. It is unclear if the other two examples were also sold and their fate is unknown. The Dominion Reefs Mine was first opened in 1888 and went through a series of openings and closures well into the 20th century. The history of No 12691 is not well documented but it is known that it was moved, after its spell at Dominion Reefs, to the Dunns Locomotive Works at Witbank where it was plinthed outside the main office block. Hannes Paling captured it on film in 1974.



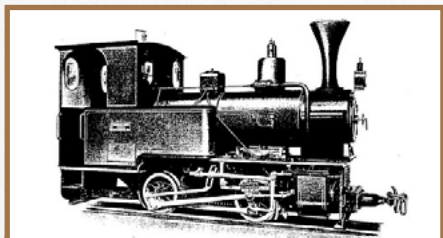
Picture courtesy of Hannes Paling

With the demise of industrial steam in South Africa during the late 80's and early 90's, Dunn's business of maintaining steam locomotives for industrial use dwindled and they finally closed their doors in August 1994. From there the locomotive was moved to the South African National Railway and Steam Museum (SANRASM) where it lay derelict and deteriorating until the demise of SANRASM in 2010. Together with NGG11 no: 52, O&K No 12691 was rescued by Sandstone Heritage Trust and moved to their Bloemfontein workshops for restoration by Lukas Nel and his team. Prior to the move Derek Walker photographed No 12691 as it lay, somewhat unloved, at the SANRASM site in Krugersdorp near Johannesburg.



Picture courtesy of Derek Walker

The O&K 60hp type weighs in at 8, 4 tons empty and 10, 6 tons in working order. The locomotive has two cylinders of 230mm diameter and 325 mm stroke with a wheelbase of 1,6m and driving wheels of 650mm diameter. The water capacity is 750 litres and the locomotive has a coal capacity of 600 litres. Maximum operating speed is 25kmh. The original style and specifications of the loco are shown below in the reproductions from the O&K sales catalogue of the period.

[illegible][illegible]

Pictures by Lukas Nel

When originally received the entire locomotive was found to be in very poor condition having endured the elements in Witbank and Krugersdorp for maybe 50 years, but now No 12691 is well on her way to being returned to her former glory thanks to the efforts of Lukas and his team. This has involved remanufacturing various components and repairing years of neglect. The frames were fractured by the driving



wheels and the entire rear portion of the frames was renewed. Most of the valve motion and connecting rods were remanufactured together with all the boiler mounts. A new cab has been fabricated as well as the well tank and side tanks. There is still much work to be done before the locomotive can be steam tested and it is hoped that No 12691 will make her debut at the Stars of Sandstone Event in 2015.

A FOOTPLATE EXPERIENCE

There is a big demand for this and we are currently trying to formulate a method of doing it which is fair to all concerned. It will be necessary for people to book a footplate experience in advance. 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 for a footplate ride is R500 for one hour on the footplate.

ESKOM POWER POLES

The big overhead power poles which used to run down the edge of our airstrip have now been removed.



Photo by: Andy Selfe

BARRY WHITE

A number of you will remember Barry White. He was the very professional guard who looked after so many passengers in 2013. Well, good news, Barry is back for next year! We were particularly fortunate this year in having quite a number of guards, train controllers, and of course our normal operating crews.



STAR-GAZING EVENINGS AT SANDSTONE

Steve Appleton, who has been to Sandstone many times and is an experienced train controller and longstanding enthusiast, also has had a lifelong passion for Astronomy. He has volunteered to give talks to groups at night under the bright starlit skies of Sandstone. This will be coordinated with an evening train which will run every second evening during the event. This should give visitors ample opportunity to ride the Starlight Express trains in the evening and to stop for half an hour whilst Steve describes to people what they are looking at.

With its Free State location against the mountains of Lesotho, far from urban light-pollution, Sandstone Estate boasts one of the clearest and darkest night skies available anywhere in Southern Africa. Following a successful impromptu star-gazing evening at the last event, weather-permitting, we will feature several amateur star-gazing evenings. Bring your binoculars and, if you are local and have one, your telescope.

It is well-known that the southern skies are filled with amazing stars and fantastic deep-sky objects not visible from much of the northern hemisphere. We plan to guide visitors around the southern night skies in their magnificent glory. The evenings will start with a talk on the night skies and what we hope to see. Whilst these evenings will be presented by an amateur and aimed at the complete novice, we will of course welcome the participation of more experienced astronomers who are able to assist, answer questions and help show visitors around the night skies.

Visitors who wish to know more about amateur astronomy in Southern Africa can visit the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa's website at:



Photo credit: ESO/Yuri Belesky, reproduced from ESO under the Creative Commons 3.0 license.

Crux, aka the Southern Cross. Shining in the southern sky, the four bright stars portrayed in the left part of this image represent a useful orientation mark which helps in identifying the South Celestial Pole. Because of the rather distinctive asterism they form, these stars have been officially classified as the "Crux" constellation, or the "Southern Cross". The vast dark cloud, visible in the lower part of the image, is usually referred to as the "Coal-sack Nebula"; it also has a preeminent role in the Australian Aboriginal culture, representing the head of an emu in the traditional constellation of the "Emu in the Sky"



PLANT A TREE

There is a lot of publicity circulating at the moment with regard to Global Warming and the need to do whatever is possible to reduce carbon emissions. Much of the publicity and rhetoric relates to what bureaucrats need to do about it.

The Sandstone Heritage Trust is located in the Eastern Free State which is traditionally a very treeless area. Its high altitude savannah means that trees are always sparse. However, under the right conditions they thrive. Sandstone has upped its game as far as tree planting is concerned. We have received 1,000 *Celtis Africana* (White Stinkwood) from the state nursery in Qwa Qwa. These are obviously indigenous trees. A lot of indigenous trees thrive in the Eastern Free State's high altitude low winter temperature environment but we are creating micro climates which makes it easier to cope with the conditions. Two species, Lombardi and the Chinese Poplar, which are not indigenous but have been planted in the Free State for more than a century, can both cope and these are being used to create windbreaks and to demarcate various parts of the farm.

We are inviting every guest that comes to Stars 2015 to plant a tree selected by us. Our teams will be in attendance and all one has to do is look around the site and if you feel there is a particular location which would benefit from a large shady tree in the future we will plant it there. If you have a particular tree that is your favourite or even a flowering shrub feel free to bring one with you and we will obviously incorporate it into the gardens and landscape. Bear in mind that it is cold in winter and it is high altitude so one needs to do some research on what will actually survive in the Eastern Free State. Certainly trees of a tropical origin will not survive the heavy frosts in winter.

We find it interesting that so few people realise what the life giving properties of

trees are. They consume carbon dioxide and they give out oxygen.

IMAGINE IF TREES GAVE OFF
WIFI SIGNALS, WE WOULD BE
PLANTING SO MANY TREES
AND WE'D PROBABLY SAVE
THE PLANET TOO.



TOO BAD THEY ONLY
PRODUCE THE OXYGEN
WE BREATHE

So whether you are at home or whether you come to see us why not pop down to the nursery, buy some trees, and surround yourself with them.

Back in the days of the 60's the Hippies were described as "tree huggers". If you think about it the merit of this has become much more meaningful in recent times.

Below is a list of indigenous trees that will grow in the Free state.

Buddleja:

Are shrubs that can be maintained or grown as small trees about 4m

- *Buddleja auriculata* – Weeping Sage
- *Buddleja glomerata* – Karoo sage
- *Buddleja saligna* - Wilf Olive
- *Buddleja salviifolia* - Sage Bush
- *Buddleja dysophylla* – White Climbing Sage

Trees with non-destructive root systems: Small 5-8m

- *Searsia burchellii*, *S. dentata*, *S. pyroides* - *Rhus* species (New name) 2m-Deciduous – Thorny Karee
- *Diospyros lycioides* - Blue Bush
- *Rhamnus prinoides* - Dogwood-Evergreen
- *Ehretia rigida* - Puzzle Bush
- *Grewia occidentalis* - Cross Berry
- *Rhigozum obovatum* - Karoo Gold or Wild Promogranate
- *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* - Camphor Bush
- *Dovyalis caffra* - Kei Apple
- *Leucosidea sericea* - Ou hout

Medium 8-10m:

- *Sersia pendulina* - White Karee
- *Combretum erythrophyllum* – River Bush Willow

Other trees:

- *Olea europea* subsp. *Africana* - Wild Olive
- *Acacia karoo* – Sweet Thorn
- *Ziziphus mucronata* - Buffalo Thorn
- *Cussonia paniculata* - Mountain Cabbage Tree
- *Bolusanthus speciosus* - Tree Wisteria
- *Heteromorpha arborescens* var. *abyssinica* - Parsley Tree.



Our Farm Nursery is bursting with trees waiting for the rain

LETTING CHILDREN DEVELOP AWARENESS OF WHAT RAILWAYS ARE ALL ABOUT

Here's something interesting from Gary Smith. A great idea. It is fine to take the kids for a ride on a train but dads why not take them for a walk and show them how things work.

Stars 2015 will provide a great opportunity for that.



ILLUSTRATED BIRD LIST IN PROGRESS

Three years ago, my wife Heide, who is an ardent birder, spent four days with me during the Stars of Sandstone week. She had not intended to, not being particularly keen on things mechanical, but was staying at the Golden Gate Park studying the numerous Ground Woodpeckers resident there. After three days I went up to collect her to bring her to another site on a private farm, near Sandstone, which showed birding promise. On the way there we popped into Sandstone just to show her the scene. She immediately changed her mind and opted to stay with me in our tent.

Well, she never wanted to leave! She thoroughly enjoyed the mechanical activity, riding trains, thundering around in Casspirs, but most importantly spending hours on a birding survey in the company of another train and bird enthusiast, and found 56 species – and this in the midst of all the activity on the farm.

This encouraged Wilf Mole to include a comment in the Stars publicity re birding tours for interested visitors. In 2013, and 2014, about twenty birders were taken around the farm, to remote corners, especially on the Caledon River which runs along the eastern border. Wilf has a great interest in preserving nature on the farm, and has rehabilitated wet lands and will allow unused areas to become bird friendly.

The list has now exceeded 56 species, and is being illustrated with photos taken in similar locations to Sandstone. We will update the list periodically, especially with photos taken on the farm. Please send them in if you have any!

The bird list will be on the website soon, and is a Work-in-Progress as we hope to add to it annually as sightings are made.

Keith Wetmore

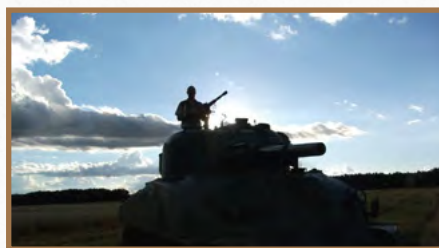


SANDSTONE BOOKS BY DENNIS MOORE

In a previous newsletter we reported that Dennis Moore had produced a number of books on the Sandstone Railway.

These can only be purchased on the web. The link provided was to the general site and Dennis has asked us to provide the specific links where the books can be found.

The direct links to the five new Sandstone books are:



Sherman... Protecting the convoy...



Watch the action...it never stops

CAN YOU ASSIST?

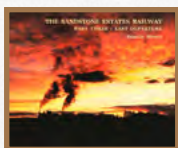
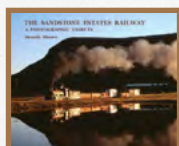
We received an enquiry from Sheryl de Klerk:

My late Grandfather B W Whyte worked at the SAR&H in Pietermaritzburg (he was an Engineer on the Railways) until he was about 60 when he retired. I am trying to find proof that he worked there for personal reasons. I was wondering if there is any way in which I could access old magazines that may have been published with employee information. I live in Benoni and am happy to come through to JHB to have a look if possible.

Thank you, yours faithfully

Sheryl De Klerk

(E: Sheryl@attorneysdeklerk.co.za)



STARS OF SANDSTONE 2014 DVD

It's receiving rave reviews. Don't forget to get yours now.

Contact: **Joanne West**
(E: joannewest@btinternet.com) or
Babita Hira (E: babitan@sandstone.co.za)
if you would like to order a copy.

"Dear Ron

I have just received my copy of your Stars of Sandstone 2014 DVD and just finished watching it.

To say it is outstanding is an understatement. The photography, music, the whole presentation was brilliant.

Without hesitation I would say it is your best yet.

I know it is hard to come up with new ideas but I'm sure, after watching this, that next years' will be just as good.

Once again, congratulations on what can only be described as the best steam DVD of the year.

The three scenes that I sent, that unfortunately you did not receive, I think would have added to your production.

I'll be sending a copy of our DVD, not for sale, as we had problems with cameras and sound equipment, shortly.

I'm about to go and watch it again with Wendy and several beers.

Regards,
Graham Black

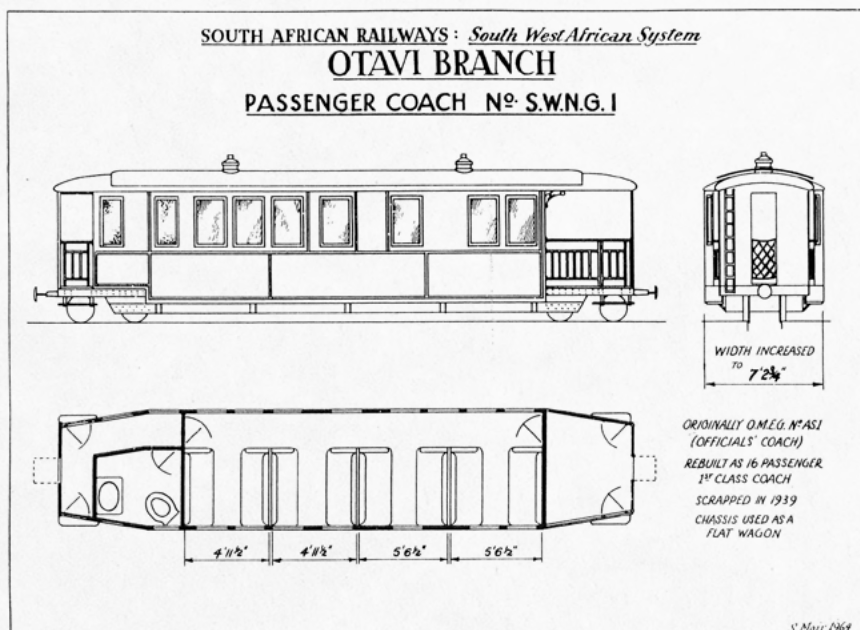
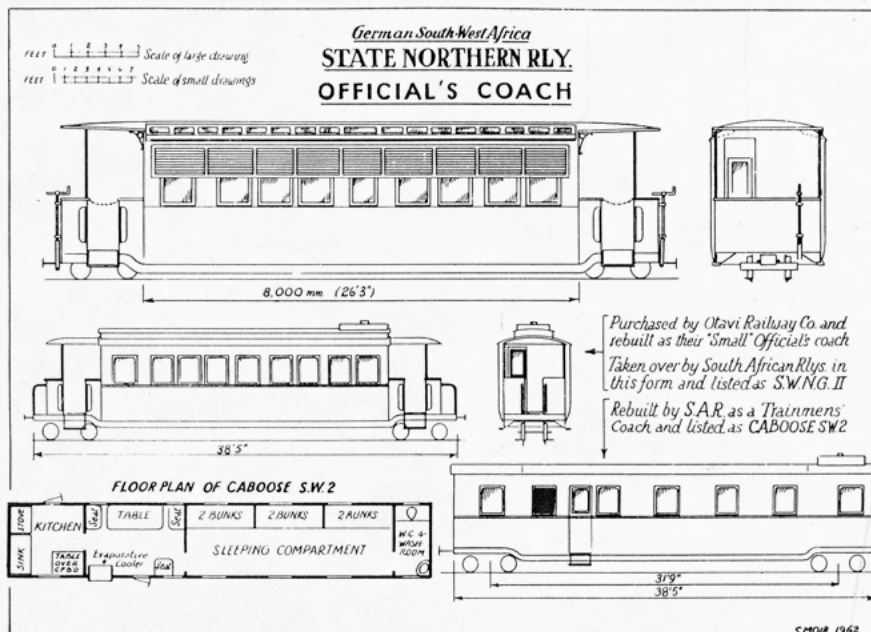
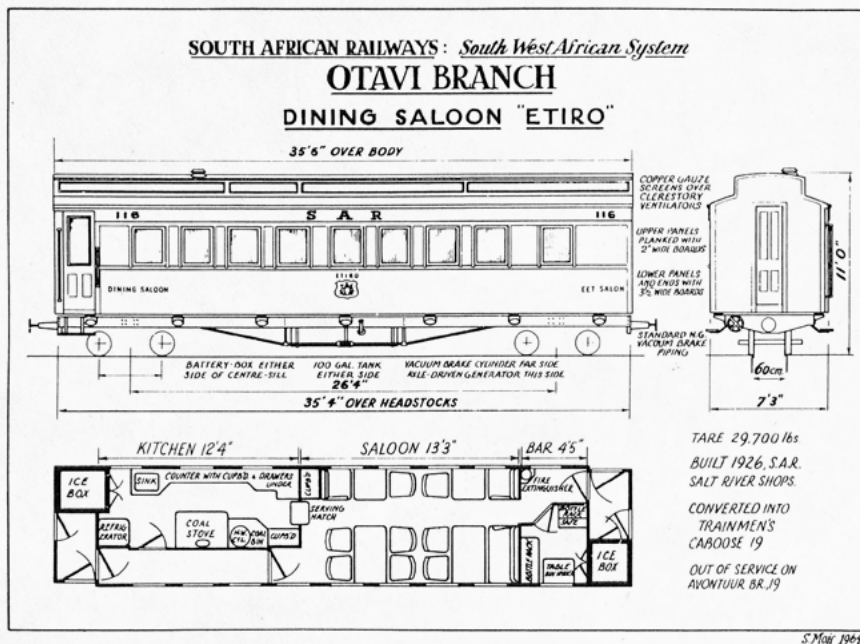
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - OTAVI RAILWAY, NAMIBIA

This famous railway is a great inspiration to people who are involved in Narrow Gauge Heritage railways.

We are interested in recreating some of the rolling stock from this railway and require drawings, good photographs, and archive material if it is available.

If anyone has access to data you think we might be able to use please contact us.

We have some drawings on this scale but more detailed drawings and particularly good quality photographs of the external aspect of the rolling stock would be appreciated.



Warwick Bryce was an enthusiastic participant in just about everything that was happening at Sandstone this year. He produced this excellent article which appears in the National Steam Centre newsletter near Melbourne.

Thanks Warwick, it is nice to read about us through other people's eyes.

We would also like to take this opportunity of commending the strong Australian contingent that grows year on year and which make such a dramatic impact on our ability to operate trains and generally get things done. The Australians have a great work ethic and many of them are very highly experienced specialists in their field.

STEAM SUPREME



Newsletter from the National Steam Centre

Sandstone's Military Extravaganza



Front Cover

Many traction engines were used for moving supplies to the front during military conflicts in the first part of last century. This 1904 McLaren engine is shown taking part in a tribute to the role of mechanization in the military during South Africa's Sandstone Heritage Trust's 10 day extravaganza



It is not always realized that the Military side of things at Sandstone in many ways rivals the railway aspect of this South African extravaganza but unfortunately it does not always get the credit it deserves .

Activities for the 10 day show are organized in conjunction with the South African Armour Museum who bring along a selection of more recent equipment which in conjunction with Sandstones own extensive heritage collection culminates in a hands on experience for military enthusiast that would have to be second to none.

Warwick Bryce , Australia

Relationship with Army The South African Army very much sees that part of it's role is to contribute to the community and as such a very close working relationship has existed for many years with the Armour Museum located in nearby Bloemfontein and Sandstone . Not only do they provide vehicles and equipment but a large contingent of personnel to assist with re-enactments to demonstrate the vehicles . Activities even extended to the evenings programme when on a number of occasions thought provoking presentations gave an insight into some of the operations jointly entered into with neighbouring countries to maintain the stability of the region .

Unique Vehicles When not being demonstrated these are lined up in the paddock not 2 minutes from the main railway station with members of the Armour Museum on hand to answer any questions about the vehicles and point out any special features. It is an amazing collection and goes right back to the beginning of the mechanization of war with traction engines from the Boer war and steam locomotives from WW1 . There are the WW2 American machines , post WW2 British equipment and with the later isolation of South Africa a whole crop of home grown machines not seen outside

the country. These are often based on upgraded older equipment but some are built locally for special conditions .

Below *Enclosed Buffel Mk 11 (Buffalo) Mine protected Troop Carrier, you can see the lack of flat horizontal under surfaces which minimises the impact of exploding land mines. South Africa made about 2400 for home and export markets .*



Of great interest was quite a range of Soviet equipment that those of us from the west had only read about . Most of these seemed to have been spoils of war originated from the Angolan Bush war of the 1970's . Such a variety of equipment is unlikely to be seen anywhere else in the west .



Left Russian Katyusha self propeller rocket launcher "affectionately " known as Starlins Organ with over 50 pipes .

Below Russian T72 tank , similar to those used in the Angolan Bush conflict of the 1970's . Note it's low profile compared to the American WW2 Sherman behind which would be hard to miss.

Vehicles were demonstrated in operation and rides were given everyday



Activities A Daily military convoy departed after breakfast from the paddock adjacent to the main railway station .

The range of vehicles varied depending on visitors interests and what the volunteer drivers wanted to give a run . The public was encouraged to ride on the vehicles be it a tank, jeep or anti mine personnel carrier . *Where else in the world can you do this ?*



Left Military convoy lined up every morning waiting to take visitors for a ride in the vehicle of their choice . Different vehicles were taken everyday to ensure variety .

Next year Sandstone is looking for enthusiasts with appropriate skills to help with the driving to ease the load on the Armour Museum's personnel .

The convoy usually followed the steam trains to the grass airstrip to see what activities had been arranged down there and then some times a further run down into the valley and along the border dirt road between the farm and Lesotho. The cloud of dust and roar and clanking of about 20 military vehicles was no doubt designed to impress those with thoughts of coming over to do some " free shopping " .

Afternoon activities were a bit more structured with a PA system set up in the paddock and the heavier vehicles and tanks put through their paces, stalking and attacking in mock battle scenes on undulating ground some distance away . Once over each vehicle was driven back at high speed over a series of ditches and mounds designed to fully



Below The pressure was really on these Armour Museum volunteers to make an emergency over night engine change on this Ferret Scout car . Enthusiasts were invited to visit the Sandstone workshops to inspect the proceedings . Although busy the mechanics still had time to tell me the original engine was malfunctioning due to the oil and petrol being mixed up .

Remarkably the army still had a new spare engine crated in 1957 . It was soon installed and purring away . The British Ferret was from the 1950's but had been updated by SA to better suit local conditions



demonstrate their capabilities. Again the machines were thrown open to the visitors who were once more full of fresh questions after seeing what they could do . With both these activities happening every day it did not take too much arm twisting and whispering in the right ear for the real enthusiast to have had a ride in everything by the end of the show . For me with only limited time due to commitments on others machines I was quite thrilled to get a drive of the Sherman tank

—How good is that ?

Right Look at the pleasure the tanks bring the visitors who flock for a close up look at the

Oliphant and T72 after seeing them in action . The *Oliphant* a locally modified and updated version of the British Centurion tank with improved gun and Continental Diesel replacing the Meteor V12 petrol engine . It is a current SA main battle tank brought down to Sandstone for the show, evidence of the close working relationship with the SA Armour Formation. (The gun points backwards for travelling).



Special Ceremonies If all this was not enough a special military ceremony was arranged .

The opening event was a tribute to the centenary of the start of WW1 . A Military train took spectators down to the balloon



loop and the Sherman tank and Wilf's Landrover were lined up with the train in the background . Photographers and visitors were strategically positioned in great anticipation of some sort of action . A spot appeared on the horizon and with a whoosh and roar the Harvard trainer fighter shot overhead so low that many ducked but those quick enough ended up with a once in a lifetime shot of the 3 mechanisms of war all in photo shot .

The Role of the Railways Mid week military activities centred around trains and a steam locomotive packed with character and a fascinating history , see opening photo , the 1915 Henschel feldbahn engine of a type specially designed by the Germans to supply the front line during WW1 . They were small sure footed locomotives capable of running on light portable track that could be moved around at the front line as the skirmish progressed . For the day the Henschel had a military consist of a large field gun , ammunition and crates of explosives in front of a camouflaged van for provision . To keep with the German flavour an Orenstein and Koppel locomotive was hauling a small passenger consist ferrying photographers and visitors around to ensure good shots of the feldbahn in operation. Today it is generally not appreciated the roll steam played in the early days of mechanised war . The scale of conflicts like the American civil war and WW1 was only made possible by the availability of the railway to keep the front line supplied .

Right Sandstone's German O & K Feldbahn (field railway) engine of the types used in WW1



The Big Show A salute to mark the anniversary of the remarkable relationship between the SA Armour Museum and Sandstone featured the development of mechanization in the armed forces over the last 150 years. It was in the form of a parade to dignitaries and enthusiasts of landmark military vehicles from the collections of Sandstone and the Armour Museum. Fully appreciated was that without this partnership what turned out to be the best display of operating heritage military vehicles in all of Africa would not have been possible.

Right Everyone was conveyed either by vintage vehicle or steam train to the grassed area by the balloon loop where a dais had been erected and PA system set up adjacent to the railway line.

Military Mechanization over the Ages



Once the GOC (General Officer Commanding) the South African Army Armour Foundation Brigadier General Andre Retief was up on the dais with Wilfred and Lyndie Mole the salute started as soon as the speeches were over.



Above The big Parade started with mounted Calvary. No not 150 year old horses but part of Sandstones security force.



Above Next came the first military vehicle a wagon hauled by Africana Oxen. They are specially bred on the farm to keep the line going



Above Steam then makes an appearance with the Estates Mighty 1901 Fowler B5 engine imported by the British to move ammunition in the Boer War.



Above The internal combustion Mechanisation of WW1 was represented by the 1915 Peerless chain drive truck supplied by the US.



Left German WW1 Henschel 1915 steam locomotive which saw action in WW1. Who would have thought it would still be capable transporting "troops" 100 years later



Left WW2 vehicles included those supplied by the USA such as the famous Willys Jeep and Dodge Power Wagon .

Nothing was overlooked for the parade with appropriate Khaki clothes provided for the participating volunteers. Incidentally introduction of khaki dress was a result of the First Boer War following the success of the inconspicuous Transvaal farmers at picking off the British in their red jackets , blue trousers and white pith helmets. This was a major turning point in warfare .

Right Saracen Armoured Personnel Carrier of British origin using Rolls Royce straight 8 petrol engine but South African modified with larger wheels suit local conditions, 1950s to 1970s . These were superseded by the South African made Buffel mine proofed troop carrier shown **Below**



A surprise for everyone during the show was Brigadier General Andre Retief taking exceptional privilege to bestow the presentation of a plaque conferring honorary membership of the Armour Museum on Wilfred for the close relationship that exist between himself and the museum and the demonstration of incredible devotion to duty loyalty and service. Wilf then responded and

recollected how 17 years ago at the bar after the Final Parade for a well know solder he was approached by an officer who knew of his historic vehicle interest and asked why he did not collect military vehicles and work in with the Armour Museum . Wilf responded “ I have not thought about it “ and the reply was “ Well why don’t you start now you can pickup one up in the morning “ and he was not kidding so Wilf sent a truck and that is how this unique relationship started ...and that man ! - None other than the Brigadier General himself . And that is how what had just turned out to be the greatest Military event in Africa got started .



*And it is on again next year .
Do not miss it ! Warwick Bryce*



Left Everything must come to an end . The Armour Museums Rooikat AFV , a medium turret technology demonstrator loaded up for its return to Bloemfontain base. They also brought down the Oliphant and T72 tanks , everything else is stationed at Sandstone.

INSIDE THE CHIEFTAIN'S HATCH. SNAPSHOTS: LP2 [WORLD OF TANKS]

Terry Boardman sent us this YouTube clip of an Australian built LP2 carrier which he thought our readers might find of interest.



WINGS WHEELS & WHISTLES

Attention all model makers - Hannes Paling has sent us some excellent photographs of a recent event "Wings Wheels & Whistles" in Pietermaritzburg.



BRIGHT YOUNG FOOD

is a blog that seeks to inspire people to eat truly healthy, wholesome, plant-based food, with an emphasis on local and seasonal produce. Food has a profound effect on both our bodies and wellbeing, with the ability to either improve or impair our health. As well as this, how and where food is grown affects the planet in so many ways, and Bright Young Food aspires to explore this and spread awareness of where the food we eat actually comes from. In short, this blog highlights the benefits of natural food, and how yummy and nutritious it can be



No Narrow Gauge enthusiast should ever forego an opportunity to ride the Cumbres and Toltec Railway in New Mexico, USA. An impeccable Heritage experience.



Photo by: Wilfred Mole

AGROCHEMICALS

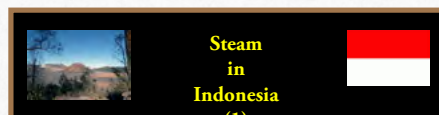
The debate is hotting up world-wide regarding the impact of chemicals on the food supply. At Sandstone we do our very best to minimise chemical utilisation. For readers of our newsletter with an interest in the environment and in the absolute necessity of eating healthy food they might like to read this:



STEAM IN INDONESIA

Fabrice Lanoue from France stays closely in touch with us. He sent us a wonderful PDF entitled "Steam in Indonesia". Here is the first of these:

Magnificent terrain and of course sturdy Narrow Gauge is still working as they have always done in the Sugar Cane industry.



Representatives from Sandstone recently visited the magnificent Durango and Silverton NG Railway in Colorado, USA. Expect a full feature story in the next newsletter.

Photo by: Wilfred Mole

Here is our official press release which is currently being sent to the media. If you are a reader of this newsletter and you would like to promote Stars 2015 to members of your club, organisation, or even local media outlet please feel free to use the attached. We can also write bespoke editorials for you if required.

Should you need that please contact **Dave Richardson (E: daver@sandstone.co.za)**.

MEDIA RELEASE:

1 October 2014

Stars of Sandstone set for another world-class festival for 2015

THE annual Stars of Sandstone Steam Heritage Festival is taking place from 2-12 April 2015. Steam enthusiasts from across the globe will once again be gathering at Sandstone Estates near Ficksburg in the Eastern Free-State bordering Lesotho in South Africa to celebrate the myriad steam-driven vehicles and machines that have been restored to pristine condition by Wilfred Mole and his team in celebration of the origins of transportation from days gone by.

The directors of Sandstone reported an overwhelming response from South African and international visitors to the fun-filled festival in April 2014, which has resulted in many new and regular visitors to the annual event, now in its 14th year, already registering to attend the festival in 2015!

Says Wilfred Mole, director of the Sandstone Estates: "In the past, we attracted mostly international visitors to this event and for the first time we were inundated with South Africans registering for our 2014 festival; so great was the response, that some visitors had not registered and simply showed up at the gates, having travelled from all corners of South Africa, resulting in some being turned away to ensure catering and activity facilities were not compromised for registered visitors.

"We therefore urge all visitors to register online to ensure they are not disappointed as our 2015 Stars of Sandstone Steam & Heritage Festival will be enjoyed by all wishing to attend the fun-filled event, suitable for all ages, including families looking for a destination to be enjoyed by the entire family.

"All the drivers of the steam and heritage vehicles are involved on a voluntary basis, travelling from across the globe to celebrate the romance and fun of a special era and we are urging such drivers and firemen to register early to participate in these sought-after activities."

Military vehicles, trek oxen, old tractors, steam lorries, traction engines, locomotives, old buses and cars will again be taking centre stage with the backdrop of the majestic Maloti Mountains of the Lesotho Highlands in the distance.

Sandstone's world-renowned 26km narrow gauge railway forms the backbone of the spectacular event and the distinctive autumn light provides a breathtaking vista ideal for photo opportunities of the vast vintage collection. Old tractors and other agricultural relics in mint condition will also be exhibited at the 2015 festival, with a few surprises to increase the daily fun level of the festival.



When asked why he thought the Stars of Sandstone Festival was gaining further popularity with younger generations, Wilfred said: "The end of an era of steam-driven or heritage transportation should not end with us and our forefathers; we should instil a love of yesteryear in our children and grandchildren so they have a deeper understanding of the history of the high-tech vehicles we utilise today. How could we possibly appreciate what we have when we don't understand the history of how it all began?"

“No one would want to miss the magnificent Mark IV Sherman tank in action, immaterial of age,” he exclaims with his usual passion for Stars of Sandstone, which was his brainchild.

Sandstone Estate also sports an airstrip and visitors enjoy the additional entertainment when pilots fly in to attend the festival, whilst Harvards and similar vintage flying machines provide enormous joy for guests wishing to enjoy an exhilarating flight in these magnificently restored planes.

The DVD of the 2014 event is available, whilst the 2015 festival will again be made available on DVD after the event to create happy memories every time it is viewed by those fortunate enough to have experienced the word-class festival.

History:

Sandstone Estates is situated on the farm Hoekfontein, which was acquired by the Mole family in 1994 to be used for mostly recreational purposes and a place to keep Wilfred's vintage tractor collection. Now a Heritage Collection, Sandstone Estates was formed as an agricultural business with specific objectives: that it should be large enough to be viable, self-sufficient and not dependent on service providers.

Today, the farm is an organised and established agri-business with livestock and arable crops including sunflowers, soya beans, maize and wheat, having hosted the Stars of Sandstone festival galas since 1999, when it was titled *The Great 100 Working*.

In the 90s Sandstone received a telephone call from the Curator of the Transnet Heritage Foundation (THF), requesting the estate store an impressive collection of vintage railway equipment, cars, trucks and tractors pending a decision by the THF on the future of these machines. Formerly housed at a museum in Midmar near Pietermaritzburg as a joint venture between the Natal Parks Board and the National Railway Authority, the Natal Parks Board decided the preservation of these relics was no longer their core business. They sent a notice to the Railways to remove all equipment.

After a few months, once the long haul of all the equipment was completed and now based at Sandstone, the machines were offered for sale and purchased by Sandstone, which resulted in the 2-ft narrow gauge railway being built on the estate.

Finally, the trust now works closely with the South African Armour Museum in Bloemfontein with the intention of building a World Class Military vehicle collection, which will showcase the unique design and manufacturing skills which South Africa is renowned for in this regard.

For registration and quotes for the Stars of Sandstone gala and nearby accommodation contact Joanne West at joannewest@btinternet.com or Babita Hira at babitan@sandstone.co.za – call +27 11 805 4692/6530 – www.sandstone-estates.com



STEAM SUPREME

We always have a lot of Australians attend our events. They always seem to appreciate what we do and they have a good understanding of what is all about as well. Here is a very useful write-up which appeared in a local Australian publication called Steam Supreme written by Warwick Bryce.

For those of you who have been to an event I am sure you will feel at home with this article. If you haven't then it is about as good a description of what we get up to as you can imagine.



Winter is behind us and the snow on the Malutis is on its way to Katse Dam
Photo by: D Benn



XANTHE 0-4-0T Avonside 1624 of 1912 at Sandstone Estate. Due to demand many trains scheduled to be hauled by small locomotives were hauled by NGG Garratts. Photo: Wendy Black

OVERSEAS NEWS

SOUTH AFRICA, Ficksberg

610mm gauge

Terry Boardman reports: Having been inspired by John Browning (LR Dec 2013), David Rollins (LR April 2014) and Graham Black, my wife Pat, and I, took ourselves off to Ficksburg South Africa and spent eleven days at Sandstone Estates for the 10 day Stars of Sandstone heritage extravaganza held from 12 to 21 April.

We only had a rough idea of what to expect and were absolutely overwhelmed with the many spectacles. On my count a total of 18 different steam locomotives were operated over the period in addition to some 35 vintage military vehicles (including tanks and armoured cars), about 10 heritage cars and trucks, six or so steam traction engines, vintage aircraft, two ox teams hauling farm wagons and farm tractors dating back to the early 1900s hauling various loads.

There were mobility displays by the military

armoured and four wheel drive vehicles and in the evenings there was convivial drinks and talk around the evening meal and several interesting talks on military and railway matters as well as displays of dancing and singing by local villagers and farm workers.

I was able to drive military vehicles in the daily convoys and at the Military Salute held on the Saturday. I also fired steam locomotives, drove a 1910 BSA rail car and was the guard of several passenger trains. Pat travelled in trains and military vehicles and enjoyed herself with the farm activities and the many displays and never ceasing activities. We both felt that our visit was one of the best holidays we have ever had.

We are saving for the 2015 Stars and can thoroughly recommend a visit to others – either as a participant or as an observer.

The 2015 event will take place 2-12 April, see www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/general-news/2958-stars-of-sandstone-2015

Terry Boardman 5/14

We close this newsletter with this powerful and compelling quotation from Henry Ford. Anyone who understands the importance of enthusiasm and who can walk the talk is going to be successful as Henry Ford was.

You can do anything if you have enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars. Enthusiasm is the spark in your eye, the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of your will and your energy to execute your ideas. Enthusiasts are fighters, they have fortitude, they have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress! With it, there is no accomplishment. Without it there are only alibis.

Henry Ford

