



Stars of Sandstone

2ND - 12TH OF APRIL 2015

NEWSLETTER NO:6

Welcome to the New Year! Registrations are steady but are probably slightly lower than last year at this time. We appreciate that times are hard for many people.

We will be publishing two more newsletters towards the middle of February and early March prior to our Stars 2015 event which will take place between 2nd-12th April 2015. We will however forward all those who have filled in their attendance documentation a very detailed programme of what is happening on a daily basis.

Please remember if you have a particular skill or if you are familiar with traction engines, agricultural machinery, old vehicles, or stationary engines you should contact us. We tend to be in good shape with our loco crews who come predominately from overseas. Australia once again is the strongest contributor of highly trained and safety conscious train crews. However, there is still time for you to register as a driver or fireman. We are still looking for Train Managers (Guards and Conductors).

The directors of Sandstone Estates have placed substantial responsibility on Dave Richardson to act as the central coordinating management individual for

the event. Dave has had a long history with the Sandstone Heritage Trust, and in particular its Narrow Gauge railway, and is as well informed as anyone when it comes to knowing what can be done and how we can best achieve it.

Dave has done a huge amount of work on the programme and the first edition of our proposed railway programme is included in this newsletter. There is still time to make changes. We, for example, had a gentleman register who used to work for Sezela Sugar Mill and so we have adjusted the outing for Sezela No. 3 to coincide with his visit dates. These type of things do not inconvenience us so if people have a specific preference for a locomotive and they let us know early enough we can often accommodate them. Dave will be on the ground for the entire show, very ably assisted with a competent team of Sandstone personnel and specialist volunteers.

So on the operational side please communicate with Dave direct on E: daver@sandstone.co.za. With respect to accommodation and other more domestic issues please liaise with Larissa Clarke on E: lclarke@sandstone.co.za. We do have options, as detailed in this newsletter.

Our crops are doing well. We have had good consistent rain. We did have a narrow escape with a fairly heavy hailstorm which coincided with a wedding on the farm, together with a visit by the Mercedes-Benz Car Club from Natal. This caused some anxious moments but everybody took it in good spirit and the celebrations continued. Even Eskom cooperated and the lights stayed on but we have got huge standby generating capacity so that is not something that we need to worry about unduly.

Please communicate with us. It is the only way that we know what people's preferences are. In many ways we practise a syncretic* form of preservation. We are not a museum but by the same token we are not a re-enactment centre either. We let our visitors assess whether the blend of active passive Rail, Military, Agriculture, Transportation and many other groups work well together.

We look forward to seeing you later in the year.

*Syncretic – adjective characterized or brought about by a combination of different forms of belief or practice



The Lawley Twins. Photograph courtesy of Hannes Paling



Stars of Sandstone 2015

PUBLIC DAY – SATURDAY, 11TH APRIL 2015



Sandstone is pleased to announce that it will be holding a special Public Day in association with the Armour Museum in Bloemfontein during its world renowned annual Stars of Sandstone event. The Sandstone Heritage Trust, which has the largest collection of Narrow Gauge locomotives in the world and one of the most impressive South African designed Military vehicle collections, holds an annual event that is fully booked months in advance. However, after consultation with the Armour Museum in Bloemfontein, who participate in a number of Sandstone events for the benefit of the public and for specialist interest groups, we have agreed to expand the programme to allow members of the public to attend for one day. There will be continuous 2-ft Narrow Gauge train rides throughout the entire 26-km circuit. We will in addition be running Military convoys which members of the public will be able to participate in by riding in Armoured Personnel Carriers like Casspirs, Ratels, and other vehicles.

Visitors can also enjoy the sights and sounds of vintage agricultural machinery, vintage aircraft as well as take a ride in a Voortrekker wagon hauled by Sandstone's span of Afrikaner Oxen. There will be plenty for the whole family to enjoy.

**Entrance is R75.00 incl VAT for adults and R25.00 incl VAT for children under 12.
Food and refreshments will be on sale.**

While booking is not essential we would recommend that people advise us of their intention to spend the day at Sandstone. However, payment can either be made in advance or on the day at the gate.



Photographs courtesy of Hannes Pallin, Rod Hering and Danie Pretorius



For further particulars contact Larissa Clarke on E: llarke@sandstone.co.za or T: 051 933 2235 / 076 024 6188
A detailed programme of the day's events will be published on 15th February 2015

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STARS OF SANDSTONE 2015 RAIL PROGRAMME

Whilst the full programme for the Stars of Sandstone 2015 is in its final stages of development we have included in this newsletter a provisional rail programme for the event. The 2015 programme has been streamlined for easier rail operations. You will notice that there are fewer specialized photographic trains in the early morning. This is at the request of Lead photographer, David Benn, who believes that the whole Stars package contains so much to photograph on its own. There is a good mixture of freight and passenger and main line and Industrial steam to be seen throughout the event.

On our first day, 2nd April, we will launch O&K 12691. The new loco will be working with various consists until mid-morning when 12691 will be joined by her other O&K sisters based at Sandstone. April 2nd will also see the first of our flagship "Mountain Wanderer" passenger trains which travel the entire system with double headed Garratts at 15h30 each day of the event. On Friday 10th April we will double head the NG4 with a Garratt on the afternoon train.

A new train excursion which will run frequently is the "Stargazer". This will run on most evenings (weather permitting) to Grootdraai where passengers will be able to study the night sky with a resident expert.

Wednesday 8th April will be scheduled for a visit to Sandstone's Bloemfontein facility whilst Saturday 11th April will be our Public Day. As we expect a large attendance, most of our trains will be passenger consists. This Saturday will also see our Military Parade and Military Salute, a highlight of the event not to be missed.

The last day, Sunday 12th April, will see a tribute to Lukas Nel, our master engine restorer and his team as we steam our launch locomotive, O&K 12691 double

headed with our 2014 launch locomotive, Avonside 1624. As our last visitors are leaving we will continue rail operations on demand.

Stars of Sandstone 2015 will be bigger and better than 2014 so book now, you won't be disappointed!

O&K 12691 stands at Bloemfontein after receiving her new paintwork. The loco will be launched on the first day of Stars of Sandstone 2015.



APPEAL FOR DRIVERS

Sandstone's Military vehicle collection gets bigger as the years go by. We are looking for people with experience with Military vehicles to come forward and volunteer to drive some of these vehicles.

For people who have not had Military vehicle experience but who are comfortable with older fashioned trucks, i.e. non-synchromesh gear boxes etc. please put your hand up because we might have a vehicle for you.

If you are available please contact Dave Richardson on: E: daver@sandstone.co.za.

APPEAL FOR TRAIN CONTROL ASSISTANTS

All of you who have attended Stars events will be aware of Peter Mole, our Train Controller. He single handedly managed the smooth running of trains in the past but we are desperately looking for assistants to ease his workload.

If anyone would like to volunteer please contact Dave Richardson on E: daver@sandstone.co.za.



Footplate rides. Photo courtesy of Hannes Paling

PROPOSED STARS OF 2015 RAIL PROGRAMME

Day	Date	Time	Loco 1	Loco 2	Loco 3	Loco 4	Consist	Routing
Thursday	2nd April	09h00	12691				Launch & display	Depot - Hoekfontein
		09h30	12691				Photos	Hoekfontein Station and yard
		10h00	12691				2 x Little Bess	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		11h00	12691				Clean fire & water	
		11h30	12691	2510	4102	10311	2 x Little Bess	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		13h00	12691	2510	4102	10311	Display in station	
		15h30	113	153			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		20h00	113				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Friday	3rd April	06h00	BR7				Farm implements	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		10h30	BR7				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	BR7				Clean fire & water	
		12h00	BR7				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		14h00	BR7				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		15h30	153	88			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		20h00	88				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Saturday	4th April	09h00	49				Ballast train	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		10h30	49				Clean fire & water	
		10h30	BR7				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	49				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Vailima
		11h30	BR7				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		14h00	49				Shunt consist for Mountain Wanderer	
		14h45	49				Clean fire & water	
		15h30	88	49			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		20h00	49				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai & return
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
Sunday	5th April	06h00	NG15				SAR Mixed	Start @ Mooihoek.
		09h00	12691				Display	Hoekfontein Station and yard
		10h30	NG15				SAR Mixed	Hoekfontein-Vailima
		10h30	12691				mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		12h00	12691				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		15h30	49	113			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		06h00	NG4				SAR Mixed	Vailima & return
		11h00	Barclay				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		12h00	Barclay				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		14h00	Little Bess				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
Monday	6th April	15h30	113	153			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		16h00	Little Bess				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		20h00	153				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Tuesday	7th April	10h00	Sena 14				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	Sena 14				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		14h00	Sandy				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		15h30	153	88			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		16h00	Sandy				Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		20h00	88				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Wednesday	8th April	08h00						Bloemfontein Visit
		10h00	Decauville				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		10h00	Little Bess				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	Little Bess				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	Decauville				Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		15h30	88	49			Passenger	Full circuit of line

PROPOSED STARS OF 2015 RAIL PROGRAMME CONTINUED...

		19h00	88	49				Hoekfontein Station and yard
Thursday	9th April	06h00						Loco Depot Photo Shoot
		10h00	Sezela 3	1624			Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	Sezela 3	1624			Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		15h30	88	49			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		20h00	88				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	BSA					Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Friday	10th April	10h00	ISE3	Arn Jung			Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		10h30	Feldbahn				Military Train	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		11h30	ISE3	Arn Jung			Mixed	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		15h30	NG4	88			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		20h00	NG4				Passenger/open wagons	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Saturday	11th April	05h30	113	153			SAR Mixed	Full circuit of line
Public Day		09h00	12691				Passenger (cocopan coaches)	Hoekfontein-Grootdraai
		10h00	113				Passenger	Vailima & return
		11h30	153	113			Passenger	Full circuit of line
		14h00	Feldbahn				Military Train	Station display
		15h20	Feldbahn				Military Train	Grootdraai
		15h30	113	153			Mountain Wanderer	Full circuit of line
		All day	Bagnall					Shunt as required
Sunday	12th April	10h00	12691	1624			Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai
		11h30	12691	1624			Passenger	Hoekfontein-Mooihoek-Grootdraai



Amongst the Cosmos

THE LAST ANGOLAN 500MM GAUGE O&K (NO: 12140 OF 1930) MOVES INTO PRESERVATION

After Sandstone's visit to Angola in 2003, four 500mm gauge O&K locomotives were brought to South Africa. All four were originally delivered to the Companhia Do Assucar De Angola for their estate in Caixito Of these, two have been restored in Bloemfontein, namely O&K 0-4-0T 10311 of 1922 (converted to 600mm) and O&K 0-6-0T 12493 of 1934. This latter locomotive was sold to the Feldbahnmuseum in Nuremberg, Germany where a 500mm gauge line is operated. It was chosen as it was the only locomotive of the 500mm gauge Angolan quartet where conversion to 600mm was not possible due to the axle type. This may now be the only 500mm gauge O&K in existence.

Of the other 500mm gauge O&K locomotives of 0-6-0T configuration brought to South Africa, no: 11112 of 1925 is well into restoration at Bloemfontein.

The last locomotive, no: 12140 of 1930, is now having preliminary boiler repairs done as a prelude to full restoration and conversion to 600mm.

As with all of its Angolan sisters, 12140 was in a very poor state and was not initially considered restorable. As the picture below shows the locos were in extremely poor condition after lying in the Angolan bush, during the civil war, which suspended most commercial sugar farming.



Three of the Angolan locos as they arrived.



O & K 11112 under restoration in Bloemfontein, 12140 will be of similar appearance when fully restored.

Initial work has begun on the boiler of 12140 at Stevens Mechanical in Howick, Kwa Zulu Natal. It has been stripped completely for a total rebuild being basically a write off.

Keith Stevens has sent us these pics of the initial work being done on the boiler of 12140.



Drilling through the foundation ring into the outer firebox wrapper. The outer wrapper riveted up to the throat plate and backhead.



The boiler barrel fitted to firebox end. All the doubler plates have been riveted into the outer firebox wrapper and the stay holes drilled. The boiler barrel has been drilled, reamed and bolted ready for riveting and caulking.



The smoke box outer wrapper
The new dome partly complete



The new tube plate which has been fabricated

SEZELA ESTATES CENTENARY 2015

Sandstone's Avonside locomotive, Sezela No: 3 is a well-known performer at our Stars events and this year, its original home, the Sezela Mill, celebrates its centenary. The mill was founded by Reynolds Brothers who began manufacturing at the site in 1915. From the outset 2 ft narrow gauge railways were to play a big part in cane production and Sezela ordered four 0-4-0T steam locomotives from Avonside to be numbered Sezela Nos: 1 to 4.

Remarkably three of the original four survive today with one in South Africa and two in the UK. Sezela No: 1 at Illovo Sugar Limited at Sezela, No: 2 at Tinker's Park in Sussex, UK and No: 4 at Leighton Buzzard, also in the UK. No: 3 was scrapped in 1972. Sandstone's locomotive was a replacement for the original No: 3.

During the 1960's the locomotives underwent various modifications, particularly to their valve gear and it is these modifications which put the actual Avonside identity of Sandstone's No: 3 in question. In fact this is the only locomotive at Sandstone where the true identity is in doubt as much identification was lost during the rebuilds. Nevertheless it is not claimed to be the original No: 3.

The Sezela system was the largest sugar cane railway in Natal with over 200 kms of track. It finally closed in February 1970 along with many other similar systems.

As mentioned in our editorial we shall be welcoming a senior manager from Sezela at Stars of Sandstone 2015 and we look forward to our own centenary celebrations with Sezela No: 3.



Sezela No: 4 in action in the UK



*Sezela No: 1 at work in 1959.
Photo courtesy of Charlie Lewis.*



Sezela No: 3 enters Hoekfontein Station at Sandstone with a short passenger train.

SLEEPER COACH NO: 29

Work progresses on this project which is hoped to be ready for Stars 2015.



Work in progress, a far cry from when the coach was collected in 2006

AVONSIDE ARTICULATED DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

One of the most interesting non steam exhibits at Sandstone is the Avonside diesel locomotive from Ellingham estates. As yet unrestored, it was one of the first diesel applications in the sugar industry of Natal.

The Ellingham Estates cane farm was 1821 hectares and made use of an old Avonside steam locomotive till 1930. It worried Fred Crooks that the steam locomotive could easily cause a fire in the cane lands and in 1926 Fred was lucky to contain such a fire in dry conditions. On the same day a huge fire at Illovo destroyed thousands of hectares of cane and killed 22 men trying to put the fire out. Fred then realized that one way to prevent fires would be by using diesel locomotives. At that time Avonside in England was building suitable diesel locomotives for the cane industry and Fred ordered one. The locomotive started her career in August 1930 on the Ellingham Estates.

Designed by L.T.Grime of Avonside in Bristol, it was a "one off" to the enquiry of Fred Crooks but the frame and bogies were used in further Avonside designs of articulated steam locomotives, some of which were supplied to the Natal sugar industry.

Ellingham Estates now makes use of road transport and the little diesel spent some years resting at the Estates. Sandstone Estates negotiated a lease lend agreement and the locomotive was loaded and brought together with seven cane wagons to Sandstone Estates in the Eastern Free State. The locomotive needs a replacement engine and it will be a very interesting future project.



The Ellingham Diesel working cane loads on the Ellingham Estates.



MILITARY NEWS

FRENCH ARMY GAZELLE HELICOPTER AT STARS 2015.

An interesting visitor to Stars 2015 will be the French Army Gazelle helicopter of Eugene Couzyn. He sent us a short note on this piece of aviation history.

"The Gazelle helicopter is historically interesting and in addition to spectacular performance, carries several "firsts" in the development of helicopters. It has been used in several theatres of conflict around the world, both as an anti-tank gunship, where it has been configured to carry rockets, missiles and a 20mm canon, as well as in scouting, observation and training roles in various military forces."

"My Gazelle is EXACTLY as it was when I took delivery of it on the Military Base in Montauban near Toulouse, and is therefore 100% authentic."



OSHKOSH R SERIES

A compatible low bed trailer is currently awaiting collection at the Armour Museum in Bloemfontein to be attached to our tri-axle Oshkosh mechanical horse. This is a 1972 Oshkosh R series as used as a tank transporter by the then SADF.

We recently received an e-mail from Pieter du Toit who worked at Oshkosh prior to their withdrawal from South Africa in 1980.

From: Pieter du Toit

Subject: Sandstone Estates: R 1858 Oshkosh Tri Axle

I worked for Oshkosh as the warranty and technical manager in the Paarl assembly plant until 1980 when American sanctions forced the closure of Oshkosh South Africa. Your Oshkosh is very dear to my heart as I was the last quality sign off to every truck leaving the assembly line.

I test drove each truck 120 kilometres before sign off. If you need any information on this truck please let me know and I will see what I can do.

I still know the marketing manager of Oshkosh Truck Supply which was based in Isando. The machine shop people are also still available and may be of assistance. The sales slogan for OSHKOSH at that time was, One Hell of a Name for One Hell of A Truck.

I will be visiting Sandstone on 7&8th April

As Pieter will be visiting Sandstone we have invited him to drive the Oshkosh at Stars 2015 in tank transporter guise with our Sherman tank on board. Here is his reply edited for space reasons:



A period publicity shot of the R Series

Thanks for your information, and the opportunity to drive the truck in the convoy. It will be a honour.

Oshkosh is truly a South African Icon. We always had the saying Oshkosh will break the driver before the driver broke the truck.

A little bit of history on the origin of Oshkosh. Oshkosh is a American Heavy Duty Purpose built Truck, specialising in Snow ploughs, Oilfield trucks, Concrete Mixers, Military Vehicles, and Fire Fighting Trucks with CFR'S being their strong point. Oshkosh never intended to be a road going commercial Truck.

It was only in South Africa that Oshkosh was used as a commercial road going truck. Oshkosh South Africa produced 3 models of trucks, R - Series - which is the long nose heavy duty truck.

E - Series - which is the flat nose cab over long haul truck - single cab or sleeper cab

S - Series - which is the snub nose long haul truck - single or sleeper cab. Now, the original factory in Paarl also has a lot of history as they built ox wagons in the early days, wooden load bodies for early trucks, then they switched to stainless steel wine tank manufacturing, and Oshkosh R- Series assembling. The trucks arrived in SKD -semi knock down.

Getting back to your truck - This R - Series was probably still built in the old factory as it reflects the American serial number configuration. Therefore early 70's. Something interesting to note is that your truck was one of the trucks that were reworked from a Cat 1676 engine which is a v8 to the present Cat 343 6 cylinder inline Engine. The reason for that is that the 1676 was troublesome in the truck application. Yet it did very well in earthmoving.

Best Regards and keep trucking.

Pieter

We look forward to meeting Pieter at Stars 2015 and watching our Oshkosh recreate some military history.



The Sherman and the Oshkosh will make a formidable combination! Picture courtesy of Alex Reichle

KEEPING FIT

To keep all our military vehicles in good order they are exercised regularly. Here we see our Saracens lining up for a Christmas patrol along the Lesotho border and some family fun with Des Clarke, Sandstone's arable manager.



7TH CLASS LOCOMOTIVE FOR DISPLAY AT TEMPE MILITARY BASE.

Sandstone's cooperative agreement with the SA Armour Museum is well known and when the Museum approached Sandstone to assist with a locomotive for display at the Tempe basis, Sandstone was glad to assist. A suitable locomotive, 7th Class no: 981 was identified at Bloemfontein. The locomotive is part of the Transnet Foundation collection. Tempe has a rich history of railway transport to and from the base and had been looking at obtaining a locomotive for some time. An agreement was signed with Transnet Foundation and no: 981 will soon be moved with Sandstone's assistance from Bloemfontein loco depot to the military base on the outskirts of Bloemfontein.

The original design for the 7th Class, 4-8-0, was prepared by HM Beatty of the Cape Government Railways (CGR) in 1890 but the first locomotives were not delivered until 1892. The initial batch of six were built by Dubs & Co. followed by a further 32 from Neilson & Company. They were placed in service on the Cape Midland section. After union in 1910 the

locomotives worked all over the new SAR system, including South West Africa, where 53 examples provided sterling service until being joined by the Class 24 locomotives in 1948. The last examples were only returned to South Africa upon dieselization in 1961. The 7th Class was a considerable step forward in design and power for the period being fitted with the first "sight feed" lubricator for a locomotive in South Africa. It also had the quick action screw threaded reversing gear that was replacing the reversing lever at this time. The locomotive was powerful for the time and light on the track. The class evolved through the 7A to 7F by 1913. The last survivors only being withdrawn by 1972.

Such was the success of the design that engines and others, based on the design, were built for Bechuanaland, Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola, the Belgian Congo, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, the three East African countries, Sierra Leone and the Sudan.

The Tempe locomotive is ex CGR no: 708, South African Railways no: 981 built by Neilson & Co. of Glasgow in 1892. Withdrawn in the late 60's, 981 was earmarked for the National Railway Museum and joined the growing collection at Millsite Depot near Krugersdorp. In 1994 the loco was moved to Bloemfontein where a number of parts were removed to facilitate the rebuild of Class 7B no: 1056 for the, then, Transnet Heritage Foundation. The locomotive is painted green.



Sister loco no: 1056 near Outdshoorn in 1997



Rhodesia Railways 7th Class no: 43 pilots 12th Class no: 190 near Plumtree in 1991.

THE CANADIAN FORD

Sandstone's Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) Ford truck (see Newsletter 5) is undergoing a full restoration in our Hoekfontein workshop. CMP trucks were a British army specification produced in large numbers in Canada during World War 2 for use by the British and their allies.

They saw service in many theatres of war notably Russia, North Africa and Europe. The wide variety of truck body designs included general service (GS), water tanker, fuel tanker, vehicle recovery (tow truck), dental clinic, mobile laundry, wireless house, machinery (machine shop), folding boat transport, and anti-tank gun tractor. They were powered by either a Ford or Chevrolet engine with options of two or four wheel drive. Sandstone's example was originally two wheel drive and has been converted to all wheel drive.



Under restoration at Hoekfontein



A CMP Ford similar to Sandstone's example

MILITARY NARROW GAUGE IN WORLD WAR 1

With the Feldbahn a prized item in our collection we were pleased to receive this link on YouTube of actual Narrow Gauge workings during WW1.

Although shot behind allied lines, the German operation would not have been that different.

Our thanks to Andy Selfe for the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-3s01i3aa7w>.

SANDSTONE'S AEC BUS RETURNS HOME

A well-known favourite in the Sandstone collection is the 1951 built AEC bus originally from Wales. In the collection since 2001, this rare Bruce bodied AEC Regal was donated to Sandstone by John Allen who bought it in Wales in 1971 and brought it with him when he emigrated to South Africa in 1991.

After enquiries from the Cardiff Transport Preservation Group (CTPG) in 2014, Sandstone's trustees decided to release the bus for export back to Wales. After raising the funds required the CPTG confirmed their intentions and the bus left Sandstone on the 18th December in transit to Durban for the sea voyage to Europe.

Sandstone is not a dealer in Heritage items but there are occasions when we cooperate with other parties whose interests are completely genuine and we make the decision that the item in question is better with them than with us. A bus that used to spend its life travelling between the different villages in Wales is slightly incongruous in the Eastern Free State.

Our Bristol bus on the other hand was supplied new to Welkom Municipality which gives it a powerful provenance for it to be with us in the Free State.

The export of the bus has been extensively covered by the Welsh media as the following links show.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-28762162>.

<http://www.ctpg.co.uk/>

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/historic-valleys-bus-return-south-6557436>

For a full story and history of the AEC have a look at John Allen's story on the Sandstone web site.

<http://www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/unlisted-inventory/68-unlisted-vehicles/1022-heritage-news-number-38>



The AEC Regal amongst the Cosmos on one of its last duties at Stars 2014. Picture courtesy of Alex Reichle.



The AEC loaded for transport to Durban and the long journey home in December 2014

SANDSTONE HERITAGE TRUST 2FT NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY VISITOR'S 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.

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. 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 Kommandonek 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 1600metres above sea level, we head towards Grootdraai in a south-easterly direction and climb up to 1614 metres to the level crossing at the Sandstone Airport. As we depart the station we pass the turning triangle on our right with its ash pit and water column with the line to the workshops heading past the silos. As the line becomes single tracked the vintage and modern machinery sheds can be seen on the right hand side. We travel on through the agricultural lands 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 the 10CR locomotive number 771 is parked. 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 breath-taking 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 ash pit together with a short spur leading to a load dock for loading and offloading of 2ft gauge machinery to and from road transport.

We leave Vailima Siding in a westerly direction with the distinctive Sekonyela 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 vlei 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.

Although facing east as we travel through the former 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 12,5km 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, 6km
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 ,75km
Sidings and Storage 2 kms

Grand Total 28,75 kms.

Line Elevation (above sea level)

Grootdraai 1605 metres
Hoekfontein 1600metres
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

WALKING TOURS OF THE COMPLEX

Throughout the event we will be arranging for someone to be on standby exclusively to conduct walking tours. The times will be up on the blackboard outside the Waenhuis and we guarantee that a trained individual will be on hand to escort people throughout all the buildings and explain what is happening behind the scenes. In a sense it a glimpse of a curatorial centre that stands behind the operating Hertiage programme.

We will be able to conduct these tours in English or Afrikaans.



SANDSTONE VISITORS

A WEDDING AND VISIT BY THE MERCEDES BENZ CLUB

Sandstone received many visitors during 2014 all of whom enjoyed their time with us and the Heritage Collection. From walking tours to train rides and ox wagon experiences this year has been blessed with good weather generally. For our last two groups of 2014, however, the weather decided to open proceedings with everything it could throw at us.

Late in December we hosted the wedding of Monique and Gert with 150 guests and a visit by the Mercedes Benz Club of Kwa Zulu Natal with 16 guests. The wedding reception took place in the Commodity Store with drinks at the Waenhuis from around 16h00 while the MB Club commenced their walking tour of the collection. From partly cloudy conditions, the weather changed within minutes to torrential rain (over 30mm in just 30 minutes) and a massive hail storm lasting some 10 minutes.

As life goes, all the wedding guests were trapped before making their escape to the reception with the MB Club caught at the furthest point from shelter. Some very bedraggled people emerged as the rain subsided and many wedding hairstyles were under immediate repair before moving to the reception. The weather gods, having had their say, let the rest of the evening proceed unhindered and judging by the noise and laughter it was a very successful wedding for Monique and Gert ending in the early hours of the next morning.

The MB Club returned from a truncated walking tour in equally bedraggled condition but enjoyed a wonderful braai supper that put the hail storm into the background. Over the next couple of days our MB Group experienced an Ox wagon ride, a steam train experience with our "Little French Lady", the Decauville plus a tour of the military collection and rides in the Sherman Tank and Casspir. Meals were taken in the Hoekfontein Station building, Waenhuis and Dining Car to vary their experience of the farm facilities.

Luckily the weather behaved and they enjoyed their three days with us.

We look forward to more exciting events in 2015 and hope that the weather gods have had their say!



After the hail storm



Congratulations to Monique and Gert



The wedding festivities in full swing



The Mercedes Benz Group



Lunch in the Dining Car

We received the following letter of thanks from the Mercedes-Benz Club of South Africa following their visit:

The Sandstone Team
Sandstone Estates
Ficksburg
Eastern Free State

17th December 2014

Subject: Mercedes Benz Club SA KZN
Region visit to Sandstone – 13-16 December
2014

Dear Larissa, Des, Leigh, Dave and the
Sandstone Team,

On behalf of the attending members of the Mercedes Benz Club SA- KZN Region who participated in the amazing extended weekend visit and planned events at Sandstone Estates I would like to convey to all of you our appreciation and thanks for the care and attention afforded us!

All were in agreement as to your dedication to your task of making our visit something very special – that in spite of the hail stones, thunder storms and a magic white wedding (hail that took on the appearance of a heavy snow storm), you all went the extra mile to ensure our comfort! The food and mixed venues was a delight to all!

The eclectic mix of activities was thoroughly enjoyed by the entire group. All at once we were Voortrekkers of the 1830's, Infantry on a mission, Tank Crew in World War 2, steaming up some passion with a beautiful 'French' lady and of course off cruising the line with a Black BSA-sublime.

Transporting us all back in time! To the year 1913, for children and adults alike, a memory divine!

There is no doubt that you have something special and unique at Sandstone and in a world today where as often as not we are faced with poor service and mediocrity – Sandstone is fortunate to have good solid folk such as you!

We will return!

Kind regards
Desmond Armstrong
Secretary/Events Coordinator
Mercedes Benz Club SA
KZN Region



ACCOMMODATION FOR STARS 2015

We have a number of options still open for Stars of Sandstone 2015. There is plenty of camping space available at R142 per day incl VAT.

Our historic ex SAR sleeper coaches are also available. They are situated under cover with toilet facilities and a short walk from the ablution block. Lighting is limited and you are advised to bring a torch or lamp plus bedding. Compartments or coupes (subject to availability) are R57 per day incl VAT.

NEW OX WAGON CAMP

This is an exciting development for 2015!

We have available 8 Ox wagons - 6 of them can sleep 8 (4 double-decker bunk beds), 1 with double bed and 1 family wagon (1 double bed, 2 single), a total of 54 available beds at R513.00 incl VAT per ox wagon. They are fitted with foam mattresses but please bring your own bedding.

These wagons are situated between trees for shade, and within a short walking distance to the ablution blocks, station and dining area. Lighting will be available in the wagons.

The ox wagons will be perfect for groups wanting to camp, but have no tent. This is easy, comfortable, and affordable accommodation.

People who snore loudly will be moved by the Oxen to a remote location on the farm!

For your accommodation requirements please contact Larissa Clarke on E: ll Clarke@sandstone.co.za or T: 051 933 2235 / 076 024 6188.



8 sleeper, 4 double-decker bunk beds



Family wagon, 1 double bed, 2 single beds

OXEN IN TRAINING

In preparation for Stars 2015, our Afrikaner oxen are undergoing a rigorous training programme under the watchful eye of Jan Le Grange, Sandstone's cattle manager. There will be many opportunities to ride behind these beautiful animals in April.



NEW FACILITIES FOR STARS OF SANDSTONE 2015

As part of our ongoing programme of continuous improvement to our guest facilities, construction has begun on our new ablution block close to the Waenhuis. This new building will relieve the overcrowding of our current limited facilities in the proximity. A number of 3'6" gauge wagons have been moved to create the space required. Our pictures show the first stages of construction.



FOR OUR WILDLIFE AND BIRDING ENTHUSIASTS

We are pleased to advise that the excellent rains have raised the water levels throughout many of the catchment areas. This is the wetland that is within very close walking distance from our main complex.

If visitors have a moment they should walk down there and look at the wild fowl. The picture below shows our main complex in the background.

We will be hosting bird watching tours during Stars 2015 which will be by appointment. If you are interested in birds and you would like to spend some time looking at our wonderful wetlands and other parts of the farm please contact Keith Wetmore on E: keith@somtim.co.za.



GAME AT SANDSTONE

One of the many pleasures at Sandstone is the wildlife. Here we see a herd of springbok running wild on the farm, in this case through a field of maize. Wildlife has the priority right of way.



MAIN LINE STEAM AT STARS OF SANDSTONE 2015

Coinciding with the Stars of Sandstone 2015 event is a proposed steam rail tour from Johannesburg via Kimberley and Bloemfontein. Run by SAR Steam Tours in conjunction with Reefsteamers we may well see a repeat of the picture below. Further details from www.sarsteamtours.com



Reefsteamers 15F no: 3016 en route to Ficksburg passes Sandstone's no: 153 at Vailima.

OUTENIQUA CHOO-TJOE

The 2-ft Narrow Gauge line between Port Elizabeth and Avontuur is the longest Narrow Gauge railway in the world and crosses the highest Narrow Gauge bridge in the world. This is an outstanding, globally recognised tourist railway. In its heyday it was regarded as one of the finest railway tourism experiences in the world but now it is defunct due to lack of investment and apparently lack of interest by the government in its well-being.

The Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe was rated the world's most scenic heritage railway and once again it has stopped operating because of lack of government support.

The Sandstone Heritage Railway in the Eastern Free State however is privately owned and operated and still continues to operate against the odds. The problem however is it is not worth flying from North America to South Africa for a holiday if there is only one thing to see.

TRANSNET FOUNDATION MOVES ANOTHER LOCO TO SAFETY

Another Transnet Foundation locomotive has been moved to safe storage at Bloemfontein. ZASM "B" No: 230 was in the care of the Oosterlyn Express club at Waterlief Boven and used only occasionally before the club's demise some years ago. These locomotives were the mainstay of motive power on the NZASM railway between Pretoria and Delagoa Bay (now Maputo). 175 were built between 1882 and 1898 but only 55 were taken into SAR stock upon union in 1910. All were withdrawn by 1930. Many were sold into industrial use. No: 230 was built by Emil Kessler in 1898 but sold into industry prior to the formation of the SAR. It was later returned to the SAR for preservation.

The locomotive is named "Jan Wintervogel"



No: 230 stands at Waterlief Boven during the late 80's.
Picture courtesy of Dave Richardson



A HOOT OF A PRESENT FOR CHRISTMAS!

In between fabricating and repairing boilers for Sandstone and other clients, Keith Stevens is a family man. He has produced a unique Christmas present for his grandson.

"I had one or two SAR whistles and my grandson was very keen to have one of these so I have made this up for him for Christmas. The base is a piece of railway sleeper which I varnished and then fitted the whistle to it. The front manufacturers name plate is one of several which I had and I thought it would look effective on it. This whistle comes complete with a SAR screw which was dated 1925."

I wonder if he has provided compressed air for his grandson for a real noisy Christmas!

The finished article, a real masterpiece.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTIONS

NEWSLETTER 5

We are pleased that our readers take time to look at our Newsletters in detail and WO 1 Dennis Green spotted the following error in Newsletter 5.

Good morning Leigh,

Would you please pass this on to the editor of the Newsletter.

The photograph on page 7 entitled "Beauty and a beast... Olifant in the Cosmos | Photograph by Errol Ashwell" refers. That is not an Olifant Tank, but the TTD or Tank Technology Demonstrator.

*Greetings,
WO 1 Dennis Green
School of Armour*

Our thanks to Dennis for taking the time to contact us and let us correct the error.

NEWSLETTER 3

In our story in Newsletter 3 relating to the move of the 3'6" gauge locos at Sandstone we inadvertently used the boiler numbers rather than works numbers for the Ex Rand Water Board locomotives.

The correct details are, Ex Rand Water Board No 1 Hunslet 0-8-0T 1893/1938 and Ex Rand Water Board No 2 Hunslet 0-8-0T 3383/1946.

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

Our apologies for the error and thanks to the eagle eyed enthusiasts who spotted it!

OVERSEAS PRESERVATION NEWS

THE LAKE MACQUARIE LIGHT RAILWAY

Terry Boardman sent us details of this Australian 2-ft gauge railway run by Graham Swanson. Both Terry and Graham will be visiting the Stars of Sandstone 2015 event next April.

With your interest in 2 foot gauge railway you may be aware on the Lake Macquarie Light Rail near Toronto a short distance north of Sydney

If not you might like to look at the following web site with its several internal links activated by clicking on the signals on the home page

<http://www.lmlr.org.au/>

Some of your regulars at Stars have links with LMLR – in particular Graham Black and David Rollins

The owner of LMLR, Graham Swanson, runs a tight ship and the way the grounds are kept and the way the locos and rolling stock are presented is reminiscent of Sandstone and a tribute to him. He is a man of many parts and conducted a course a couple of years ago, that I attended, to qualify people as boiler attendants

PS The restoration of the loco "Jack" mentioned on the web site has now been completed and it can be seen in action on trials in the following video clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAgA-BwQQAM>

Hope you enjoy
Regards
Terry Boardman OAM

ANOTHER NGG16 SET FOR RESTORATION

One of Sandstones long-time supporters, Peter Best from the UK, inspired by his visits here, has acquired NGG16 No: 130. A Beyer Peacock example, it was delivered in 1951 and initially worked on the Ixopo branch before being transferred to Port Shepstone.

[Click here to see the full press release.](#)



No: 130 as acquired by Pete Best.

THE PRESS HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT US, CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW:

<http://www.essentials.co.za/event/stars-sandstone>

<http://sapressonline.com/tillysmith/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Screen-Shot-2015-01-15-at-1.21.31-PM.png>

<http://travmedia.com/Company/ShowPressrelease/344812>

<http://www.childmag.co.za/content/stars-sandstone>

<http://www.eglobaltravelmedia.com.au/steam-and-travel-from-yesteryear-festival-set-for-april-2015/>



CLICK HERE TO VISIT
OUR WEBSITE