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Worth \$3

STEAM SUPREME



Newsletter from the
National Steam Centre
Melbourne

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South African

STEAM



**In
This
Issue**

**2 FOOT GAUGE
RAILWAY SPECIAL**



Kerrisdale



Sandstone

From the President

The new shed has had the building permit issued. Thanks to the Morris's the shed footprint has been levelled.

Production of the steel work is about to commence at Trusteel with site erection to commence about 10 May which should see the shed itself completed by end May. This will then leave us to finish storm water and power to the shed which we must do in order to obtain the occupancy permit.

Several people have suggested retaining the name Federation shed for this as the new shed attaches to the existing Federation shed.

Many of you will remember one of our former long term members John Hetrelezis who died several years ago. With his wife dying in January this year the family home has been sold. His youngest son Brian is a club member and with the clean out of the property a Buncle Chaff cutter, lathe and diesel generator have come to the club. However John also had a wide range of very useful steel and brass stock which has been donated to the club. Thankyou to the Hetrelezis family.

Ross.

Right Bob admires the first trailer load of goodies , the second load included the steel rack as well



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SUNDAY TRAIN & MUSEUM ROSTER

May

6 Stapmanns

13 Neil Meyers John Palmer

20 Lloyds

27 Rail Team

June

3 Warwick Bryce Geoff Bellinger

10 Bob Ayris Phillip Singelenberg

17 John Gotts John Meade

24 Rail Team

July

1 Rex Gotch & Adam Powell

8 Stapmanns

15 Neil Meyers & John Palmer

22 Warwick Bryce & Geoff Bellinger

29 Rail Team

Contributors

Dave Mickle , Wilf Mole (Sandstone), Aaron Morris, Ray Bedford

Front Cover

Dave Mickle's T model Ford has run out of petrol in the wilds of Africa while Robin Gibb comes to the rescue in the Sandstones Sentinel Steam wagon. Photo Aiden McCarthy

Insert

Tank Loco at Sandstone Photo Ruediger Fach

KALAHARI SUNRISE 2012

Entry Permit No 85

DAVID MICKLE



Quadruple headed Baby Garratts and sextuple Oxen at Sandstone in 2011

I did not have much interest when Dave started talking about Sandstone Estates Narrow gauge steam Gala as all I had heard about South Africa was negative. That slowly changed as I learned more about the place when helping Dave with arrangements through the internet . The outcome was Dave had a wonderful time at what turned out to be the greatest narrow gauge experience in the world and I am now sorry I did not go . Perhaps there will be another chance.

Here is a bit of what went on pieced together from Dave's accounts , correspondence with Wilf Mole of Sandstone Heritage Trust and their web site.

What is Sandstone Estates ?

Fortunately they have a very good web site so with a bit of poking down worm holes a picture began to emerge. To day it is a 7000 hectare wheat, sun flower and soya producing farm. The agricultural side of the business is highly commercial based on large paddocks and large machinery while at the same time adopting a policy of minimal soil disturbance to preserve moisture and stop wind erosion. As much processing of the grain is done on the farm as possible such as storage, cleaning , grading and packaging. Attempts at raising live stock had to be abandoned because of difficulties with the poor black neighbours in recognising farm boundaries.

The farm was established in the 1840's in the Eastern Free State of South Africa and had been in the one family until purchased by the current owner in 1995. Apparently many farmers in this area hang onto old equipment as long as it is still useable so when the new owners took over they found a

venerable living museum with many old tractors still being used. Fortunately this catered for the new owners love of collecting historic vehicles so the decision was made to keep it in use where practical. About this time a large number of narrow gauge railway equipment came on the market following the decision of the authorities not to persist with preservation attempts. Sandstone put in a bid and suddenly found themselves with enough equipment for a 2 foot gauge railway . The turning point was the decision in 1999 of Sandstone to hold a world record attempt at the number of vintage tractors working in a paddock at the same time. To make the show a bit more interesting it was decided to see if they could get a steam loco going and set up a short length of track. Well as they say the rest is history , they got the Guinness book of records for 99 tractors which then kicked off a world wide round of events while at the same time the seed was sown for establishing a narrow gauge railway .

Where is Sandstone

This took a bit of finding . It is in a remote mountainous region of Eastern South Africa in the Free State. The country round there consists of rich river flats surrounded by a series of sandstone escarpments leading to rocky high country . Surprisingly not unlike around Kununurra in our Kimberlys. One edge of the farm is only separated from Lesotho by a shallow river . This is a poor country presided over by a black African King which makes for very interesting neighbours indeed.



How to get There.

This was the biggest challenge facing Dave. The Steam Gala was essentially a private affair in a remote area with no conducted tours or public transport (or not that you would want to use anyway I was advised) . The nearest airport was Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State with Sandstone about 2 hours away with the only option being hire car. Accommodation was another issue with none available on the farm which again necessitated having a set of wheels. I

managed to get an itinerary put together by a Bureau specializing in African tours based on a Chauffeur driven car but it did not look very viable. Then a breakthrough I heard on the grape vine some other Australians were going and asked Sandstone to put me in touch. Dave managed to fit in with their arrangements which worked out better for everyone and he was soon on his way feeling much more confident.

The Railway

With the embryo railway up and running it soon became obvious they were the only ones in that part of Africa collecting 2 foot gauge equipment so the collection just grew as material became available. Another opportunity was the Steam Running Shed in Bloemfontein coming up for rent . This enables Sandstone to set up a loco rebuild facility with some of the original fitters becoming enthusiastic and joining the team.

The cards seemed to have fallen in places and today the Sandstone Heritage trust railway has 26 km of track, and 20 operational steam locomotives with another 30 in storage

From Perth

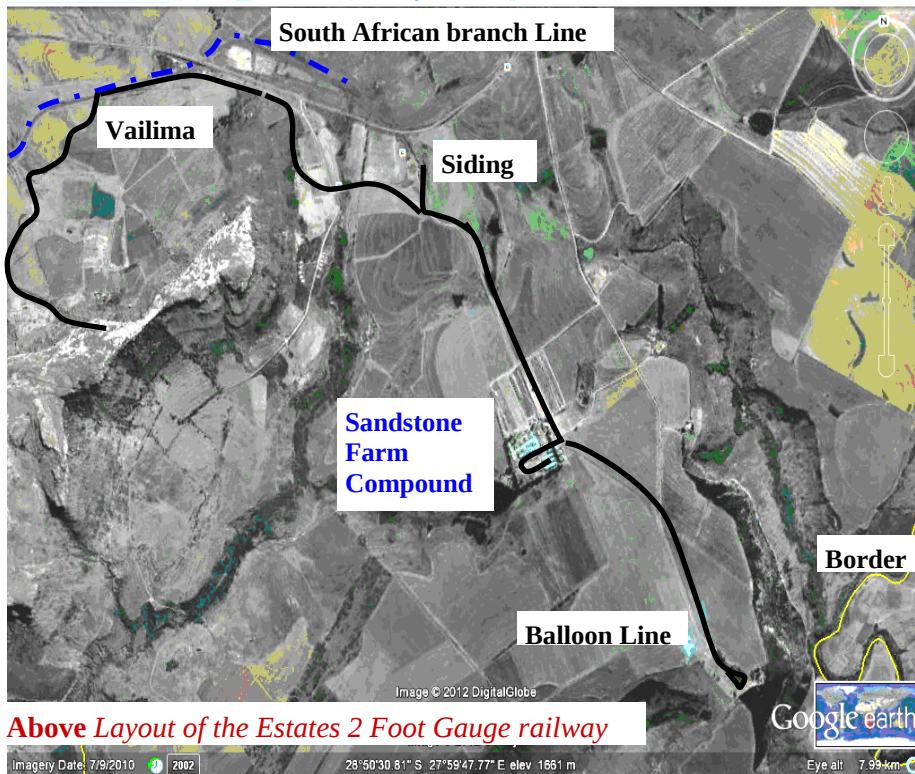
Below . This years Steam Gala was titled *Kalahari Sunrise* being the centenary of what came to be known as the *Kalahari class NG 5 & 15*. Originally designed with large coal and water capacity for use in the then German colony of Octavia (now Namibia) in South Western Africa and built by *Henschel & Sohn* in Germany . Being a 2-8-2 the middle set of drivers was flangeless to handle tight curves but later developments allowed the leading driving axle to move sideways controlled by the leading bogey. They were a popular loco with later batches being built up to 1958 with a batch made by *Franco-Belge*. They weighed 57 Tonnes without tender with tractive effort of about 7.5 tonnes. Sandstone arranged a couple of very early morning runs to catch the sunrise.

Details from Wikipedia. Photo taken by Hannes Pailing and made available by Wilf Mole for his internet visitors.

Kalahari Sunrise—Early morning shot of Kalahari class loco with mixed agricultural consist Photo Hannes Pailing



and about 100 items of rolling stock making it possibly the biggest narrow gauge system in the world .



Above Layout of the Estates 2 Foot Gauge railway

While the railway serves an important heritage function part of the vision was to play a major role in transportation on the farm. Tracks were laid to connect with the S.A. National Railway branch line at Valimia but the authorities are reluctant to reinstate freight traffic on this line . Running the railways seems to have got all too hard for the government which it has found easier to let the freight be handled privately by road. Inevitably it now seems the roads are breaking up under the pounding of heavy transport. To date the Sandstone system has not yet fully carried out the role intended but still operates a few times a year bringing train

enthusiast from all round the world to South Africa. This lead to the unfortunate comments to the effect of “ toy trains for rich whites to play with”. But now it seems the tourist potential of this venture is beginning to be recognized

The Gala

It must be appreciated that it is a private system operating on a working farm and not ordinarily open to the public however about once a year they like to hold a special 8 day event for local and international rail enthusiast. Attendance must be pre arranged and entry permit purchased at about \$100 per day. This year about 150 railway enthusiast attended , mostly consisting of rail men and photographers. Since there are about 20 locos and a number of road vehicles in steam over the week volunteer guests are used to drive the trains . These are mainly made up of drivers from the Welsh Highlands railways and Australians including Bennetswood Railway (one of the ones that we visited in Perth). Trains are run on a rotation basis in the mornings and



Above Bob Baker from Perth having the time of his life driving the Garratt 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 made by Hunslet Taylor in 1968 Photo Hannes Paling

Specifications are impressive being 48 ' long 7' wide and 10' 4" high and weighing 60 tonnes. Tractive effort is 8.4 tonnes. Of course the Garratt configuration has a power bogey at each end under the water tanks with the boiler spanning in between giving high traction but the ability to negotiate sharp curves. Puffing Billy has recently imported 2 similar engine from South Africa which will be re gauged to 2" 6" .

Left The estates 1910 BSA reconstructed rail car .



Hannes Paling



Aiden McCarthy

Left Mobile steam in action for the Gala consisted of a Fowler crane engine ,Sentinel wagon and McLaren traction engine pulling 2 trailers loaded with vintage tractors . Quite a few rollers and tractions await restoration.

afternoon with suitable combinations of locos and wagons loaded with appropriate goods from the

farm and museum. In many places the line runs along side farm roads giving an opportunity to photograph moving locos from vintage vehicles and vice versa . Adding to the atmosphere as many of the Heritage Trusts other vehicles are in operation as well . It is not unusual to see vintage tractors operating in the paddocks a steam roller attending to the roads and fowler crane engine loading wagons with appropriate period goods . The estate also has a large military collection in conjunction with the SA Armour Museum . In fact loco driver Bob Baker reports hearing a rattling and roaring and on looking out saw his train being raced by the estates Sherman tank (it won easily being fitted with a twin turbo Mercedes V8 diesel engine) . This is not always the case particularly with vintage cars which often are photographed broken down when following the train (see cover photo)

Each day photographers and spectators travelled by goods wagon or vintage

bus out a to scenic section of track or a particularly difficult incline and line the sides



Hannes Paling

Above The Kalahari this time with the sun well up. Not a bad sized engine for 2 foot gauge. It is supposedly delivering agricultural spares and 2 “ new “ 1957 Massey Ferguson 35 tractors .

of the track The engine then backs up and charges the bank with drains open and fire billowing black smoke a number of times until all are sure they have that perfect shot.

Usually at the same time the opportunity is taken to get some of



Left A rare 1939 John Deere model H from the Sandstone Heritage Trust. The trust has a huge collection of vintage tractors numbering approximately 700 of which over a 100 are restored and kept in working order on tasks around the property while a fleet of huge modern tractors attend to the broad acre farming.



Aiden McCarthy

Left The estates 1915 military Feldbahn 0-8-0 Henschel locomotive with a consist from Sandstones army display. I hope the spark arrester works the last crate is marked "High Explosives" Wilfred Mole was very interested to receive pictures of my Stuart tank as he has a Sherman.

Right The estates Bristol bus waits at the crossing while NG 4 class 4-6-2T Kerr Stuart loco and goods train pass. The bus was used to ferry spectators and photographers out to various track locations for steam passes.



the collections road vehicles out to the line adding to the vintage experience and photo opportunities. After lunch the performance is repeated at different part of the line and different combinations of locos and consist until virtually all combinations have been run.

Spreading the Word.

Sandstone Trust director Wilf Mole sums up this years event by saying although the Gala was a great success there is very little interest in South Africa in what the trust does as reflected by the lack of local visitors. Increased numbers of overseas visitors are necessary for there to be reinvestment in preservation. As the general public has little comprehension of the significance of the items working visitors must come from the specialist organisations overseas so please

Below Sandstones recently purchased this Foden half cab dump truck. Being in sound condition and still practical to work the estates modern tipper was disposed of in line with the policy of using heritage equipment where possible.



Aiden McCarthy



Sandstone Staff

Left To the casual visitor the amount of work required behind the scene by staff and volunteers to set up the show is not obvious. This picture taken by Sandstone's staff several days before the Gala give an idea. Several people including loco driver Bob Baker went over 1 week in advance to help with the preparation.

Right "Big Power on Display".

The picture everyone came for Quadruple headed narrow gauge NG G16 Garratts lead by a Kalahari. The NG15 No 17 Kalahari was built in 1931 by Henschel. The NG G16 Garratts are No 113 Beyer Peacock of 1937, No 153 Hunslet Taylor 1968, No 88 Cockerill 1936, and No 49 Hanomag 19???. This is the first time they have had enough drivers to run the 5 big locos together



Aiden McCarthy

spread the word throughout your club with a slide night and showing one of the DVDs.

Now I take this as an invitation to us all to attend the next Gala. I will certainly be putting away my pennies, what about you?

Warwick

Acknowledgements

David Mickle, Wilfred Mole

Sandstone Heritage trust web site

Photographers Aiden McCarthy,

Hanne Paling, Ruediger Fach for making their photos available for use of web visitors.



Above Dave poses with the 1901 Fowler B5 crane engine originally built for military work Wilf Mole photo



Below Dave was a hit with the catering staff. All meals were provided on site to avoid difficulties finding something to eat in town out of hours.



Above Sandstone is intensely proud of their team of Afrikaner oxen and have gone to great trouble to perpetuate this rare breed. They are regularly used on the estate. One of the Gala activities was using them for hay carting. I noticed the program called for volunteers to transfer the bales to the waiting train.



Andrew Forbes is perhaps best known for his cobbled up Invincible steam tractor which has gone through 5 incarnations over the last 40 years however his ultimate ambition to own his own railway has now been realized with the Kerrisdale Mountain Railway. Warwick payed it a visit over Easter.

Mountain Railway is no exaggeration, with his property perched high up on a ridge about ½ way between Seymour and Yea there is no option. Before starting much research was done on the types of railway used in terrain of this nature. Steep grades, tight turns and a zig zag formation would be required to gain the maximum height in the shortest distance. The first stage was to establish an erecting shop with a short length of track then thoughts turned to the construction of a steam loco. It soon became obvious this was a long term project so a vintage WW2 Malcolm Moore diesel locomotive was acquired and restored. Then began the construction of rolling stock, initially mostly works vehicles so the construction of the line could proceed up the mountain. Before long the embryo railway was up and running and soon thoughts turned to opening the railway to the public so open sided riding cars were the next project. From here it just grew with the establishment of a station, museum building and kiosk at the bottom terminus. Sidings and switch back were built halfway up the mountain topped off by a platform and gardens at the summit.

Panoramic views

The 2 foot gauge train departs from the shed / museum with the loco at the rear pushing, immediately it climbs quite

Below A 1 in 12.5 climb commences immediately leaving the museum building



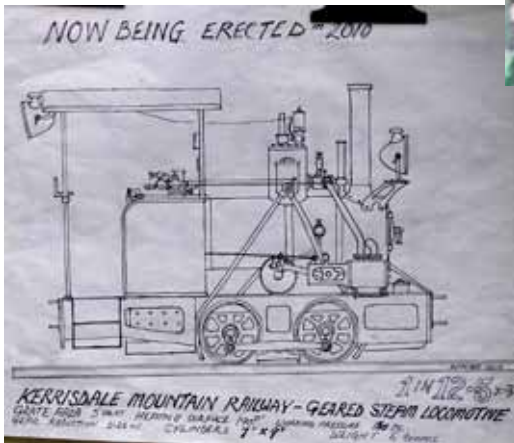
steeply at 1 in 12.5 to get off the terrace then wends its way along a precipitous track cut into the hill side then levels out for a short distance while it passes a storage siding before continuing on to the points of the switch back. After changing the points Andrew draws attention to the stunning view of the Alps before the train moves off up the top road with the loco pulling at an easier grade of 1 in 33. Before long we swing around the brow of the hill and arrive at the Summit station. This is all very neat with a shelter and gardens featuring mining timber and agricultural artefacts from the district. The nearly 360 degrees of view lets us see right down to the Goulburn river and across to Mt Buller. Andrew then gives a run down on local history and points out the old track bed of the Tallarook / Yea railway which is now a popular rail trail. We then commence



The Summit

the descent of 125 feet and arrive back at the museum after about ½ a mile for a total journey time of 35 minutes.

Museum and Workshop Andrew demonstrates a number of superbly restored steam engines in his museum which is powered by a Davey Paxman portable engine. We are then invited to inspect his extensively equipped engineering works and see the progress on his long dreamed of steam locomotive.



the country a tumble could mean kids disappearing over the edge into the valley below. The ride is spectacular with the terrain dictating a slow travelling speed giving a return time of 35 minutes which is about right however it would be a bit more interesting if a longer distance could be covered. Another switch back would give a true zig zag and a greater sense of actually travelling somewhere. Never the less building a line in this country is a great achievement and gives a rare chance to see equipment typical of that used on military railways to transport supplies and ammunitions to the front line over rough country. It will be really something when the steam loco is in operation. Maybe we

could make it a club outing? **Above** Andrew demonstration vertical inverted engine to Jim Bennett and other Yarra Valley members



Above Loco boiler under construction ready for inspection.

Left General arrangement drawing show 0-4-0 with chain reduction drive

Summing Up What immediately struck me was how tidy and well maintained everything was with all exhibits and even native plants neatly placarded. The picnic tables in front of the museum allowed you to have a snack while enjoying the view yet keep an eye on the machinery in the museum. I would have liked an opportunity to follow the line on foot and snap the train at various points along the track, but when not on the train the public are confined to just the areas outside the terminus and museum. This is understandable given the steep nature of

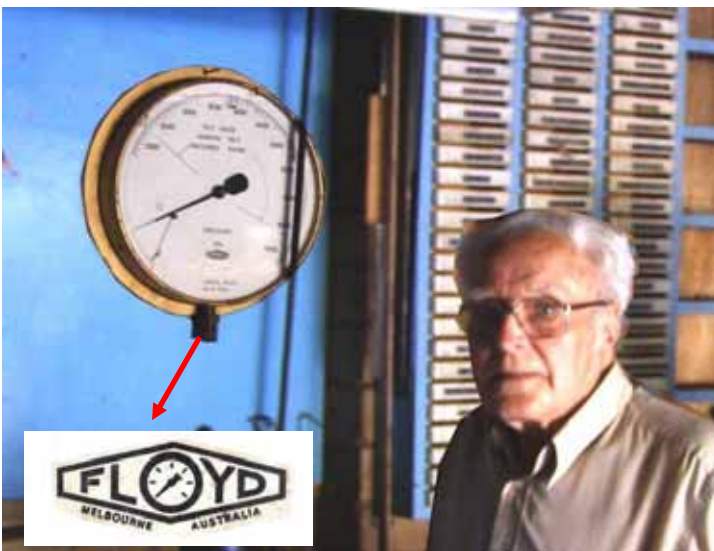


Around the Club

Pressure Gauge Donation

Jack Harper long standing member of the Model Engineers and keenly interested in the Steam Museum has decided to close his workshop down and donated the Club a rather splendid pressure gauge, of about 400 mm dia. that has graced his workshop wall for many years. Although Jack knows nothing of the history of the gauge a quick look suggested it is something special. First things to strike you are the very fine needle and graduations for such a large face suggesting it is intended to be read close up and is obviously made for taking very accurate readings. A full scale reading of over 7000 kPa (1000 psi) and with each graduation representing 25 kPa suggest an accuracy of about 0.25 % . Further more there are no graduations below 2000 kPa just a note informing "Preferred Working Range " 2250 to 6,700 kPa . It is obviously a test gauge of the very highest quality for a bourdon tube instrument. What is interesting an internet search revealed it is a Melbourne made instrument from Floyd , "Australia's leading manufacture of industrial measuring equipment". Founded over 70 years ago they are now the only manufacture of gauges in Australia and still supply and repair gauges and industrial thermometers to customers requirements .

A very fine gauge indeed and of local manufacture to boot .



Thank you Jack it is now up to us to display it to the best advantage

Willans Progress

With the Quadraplex air compressor restoration complete attention has now turned to the crankshaft. As we knew the



engine was decommissioned when No 2 big end bearing ran so establishing the true extent of this

damage was the next priority. Clean up and inspection showed light scoring of the pin but heavy rust pitting leaving no option to regrind . The commercial price for this is around \$ 7,500 although a bit of discount is expected . With only one local concern (Paul England) being capable of doing the almost 4 metre long shaft the only other option was to send it to Singapore. The Committee is convinced the expenditure is justified as we are only aware of 2 other examples of this original design multi cylinder Diesel engine that can be run . (both in UK at MOSI & Prickwillow)



Frank Gough and James Gleeson with the Willans crank now out of the engine. The restored compressor is behind them

Hetz Estate Generosity

We have been informed that it was John's wishes that although a number of his machines remain in family ownership they be located at our club and be available for club use. These include the 2 superbly restored portable steam engines (these are the blue engines that sometimes drive the stone crusher) , Lister Auto truck and horizontal milling machine that have resided in the Hetz area of the MMM shed since its construction. Added to that is now a middle sized John Buncle & sons chaff cutter of local manufacture. The Buncle business was established in Melbourne in 1853 and continued until 1951 when merging with Commando. Products included ironwork for bridges and agricultural machinery . They contributed considerably to the development of chaff cutters and held a number of patent for their improvements. Restoration of this machine is

