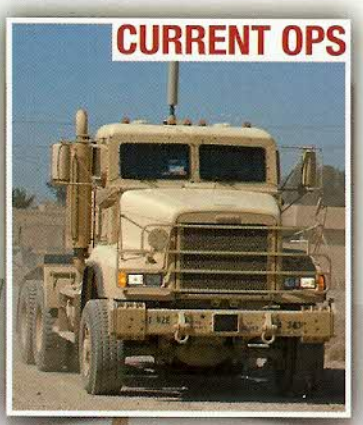
THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF MILITARY VEHICLES

MILITARY MACHINES

INTERNATIONAL



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Sandstone Heritage Trust

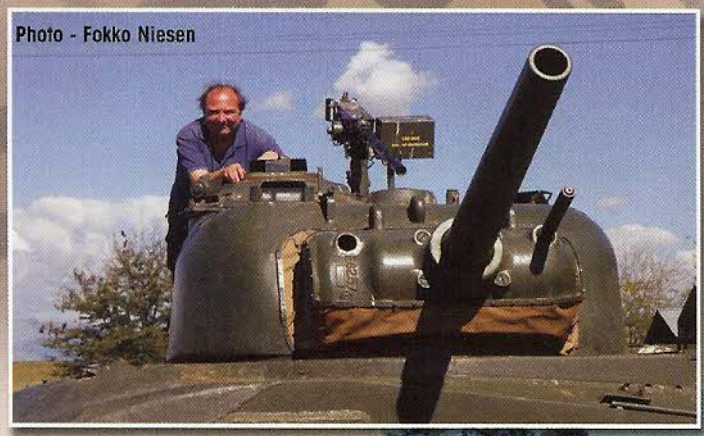


Photo - Fokko Niesen

The Sandstone Heritage Trust is a private Preservation initiative established on a commercial farm in the Eastern Free State in South Africa. The present owners purchased the farm from the Wille family in 1995 having been in the continuous ownership of the Willes since the 1840's, meaning the farm has only had two owners over a period of 170-years! The arable farmland along the little Caledon River, the official border between South Africa and Lesotho, is rich in agricultural potential. It's a particularly beautiful part of South Africa with sandstone outcrops nestling under the towering Maluti Mountains high above the Drakensburg range. It's an area where farming has quietly continued using traditional methods for centuries.

Many of the farmers living in this area have a great sense of history and had preserved farming machinery and continued with farming practices, which are more nostalgic than commercially realistic. The farm Hoekfontein was therefore in a way a living museum with Lanz Bulldog and John Deere 720 diesel tractors still in daily use. Notwithstanding the fact that they were simply going about their business, the Willes without realising it had created an environment that would have delighted any agricultural machinery enthusiast.

The new owners recognized this and decided from the outset that they would do everything they could to maintain the facilities, machinery and even the skills needed to keep the old farm machinery and farming methods operational. The machinery is not obsolete from a practical agricultural standpoint and



Photo - Wilfrid Mole





Photo left - Thomas Kautzor
Photo below - David Benn



Photo - Gary Barnes

Photo - Fokko Niesen



Photo - Fokko Niesen


Photo - Rod Hering


Photo - Wilfrid Mole

so to this day the practice of continuing to use old machinery to carry out important functions on the farm is studiously adhered to.

The Midmar Museum, which was a joint venture between the Kwa-Zulu Natal Parks Department and the Heritage section of the National Railways was dissolved by mutual agreement in 1997 and a selection of Narrow Gauge assets and the railway line came on the market. This event would give new direction to the Sandstone heritage program. These assets were put up for auction and after successfully bidding for the items Sandstone was suddenly the owner of enough components to create a small Narrow Gauge railway. It was decided to lay some track and to bring one of the NGG16 Garratts back into steam.

A pivotal point in the heritage program's development was the decision by Sandstone to hold an innovative attempt at the World Record for the maximum number of vintage tractors (pre 1960) working in one field at one time. In order to make it more interesting for spectators a short section of railway line, which had been obtained on the Midmar auction, was built and the Garratt with a few coaches was cobbled together. The event was in fact the first attempt of its kind and it took place amidst great international fanfare. It was awarded with a Guinness Book of Records certificate. 99 tractors participated.

The rest is history and the record was recently broken in Ireland with over 5,000 tractors in one field at one time. South Africa can be truly proud of the fact that they were the innovators with a vintage agricultural event that galvanized interest in people around the world.

The activities of the Sandstone Heritage Trust in the Military vehicle preservation arena have been expanding steadily, having recently collected two impressive Military recovery vehicles, one being a MACK and the other one being a South African Mine-protected Bulperd.

Each year the Sandstone Heritage Trust holds a 'Steam Gala Weekend', which involves the many preserved steam locomotives, but has increasingly seen the addition of various other vehicles being displayed and demonstrated and the most recent event in late 2011 saw a superb collection of military vehicles getting involved. Visitors to the event saw the likes of a Sherman tank, Jeeps, SADF recovery vehicles, armoured cars, classic and vintage cars and vehicles and even steam traction engines, running around the estate, all set in the stunning scenery of Eastern Free State in South Africa. It was a remarkable event, and one that steam and indeed military vehicle enthusiasts enjoyed enormously.

We've included a number of photos from the event on these pages, sent courtesy of Wilfrid Mole and Joanne West of the Sandstone Estates, home of the Sandstone Heritage Trust, but you can find out more about the Trust, the collection and the various events by logging on to their extensive website shown below, and they even have DVDs available

http://www.sandstone-estates.com



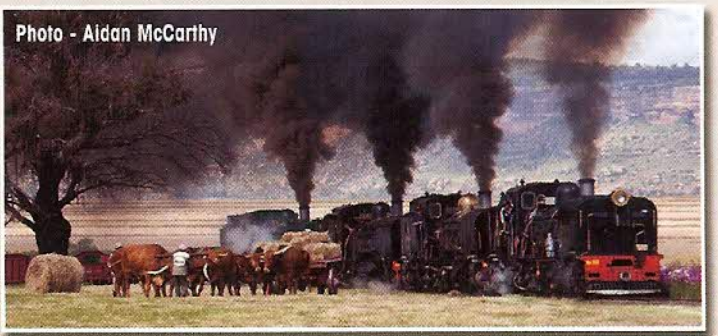

Photo - Aidan McCarthy


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