steam in action
south africa

EDITION 3 KEEPING TRACKS FEBRUARY 2008

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Your comments, queries and suggestions are always welcome!

Please email:
joannewest@btinternet.com

Steam in Action - An Association Incorporated under Section 21
Registration Number 2007/035119/08
www.steam-in-action.com

From the Ed

Last month we promised you shorter and more frequent editions of our newsletter so here we are with issue number 3. The marvelous thing about SIA is the sheer exuberance of our supporters around the world as we are now truly an internationally known organization as you will see as you read through this edition. This has also translated itself into a wealth of articles, information and reaction to the efforts of Steam in Action, so much so that we have virtually filled our next two editions.

Executive Director, Dave Richardson has now settled in to his new position and has been in contact with many of the preservation role players in South Africa. As one of the founding members of HRASA Dave is well positioned to take SIA forward with HRASA and develop and cement the relationship between SIA and HRASA which is so essential for our mutual success. As time goes by we will be telling you more on the efforts both ourselves and HRASA are putting in to uplift preservation efforts in South Africa and in particular bring steam tourism on a grand scale back to our country.

Enjoy the read.

Welcome to our February Newsletter

WORKING TOGETHER ...

There are significant developments taking place behind the scenes which will impact upon the future of Rail Preservation in South Africa, the future of the surviving locomotives, and probably the extent to which the clubs and operators are likely to prosper or not prosper in the future. The signs are encouraging. A close working relationship has developed between Steam in Action and the Heritage Rail Association of South Africa. By talking and sharing ideas we are able to get things done. We like to see SIA as an executive of the heritage rail movement in South Africa. We are actively pursuing a programme to save locomotives, move them, consolidate the national locomotive inventory and on a planned and sensible basis we hope to bring as many of them as possible back into steam.

It is only by pulling together, by taking advantage of the enormous support that potentially exists from our SIA members, and perhaps just as importantly by working together with different players in South Africa itself are we going to achieve unity and above all credibility in the eyes of officialdom. Any infighting or division between clubs or groups who might feel justified in squabbling over individual assets is counterproductive to the achievement of a much higher and more worthwhile set of priorities.

This will be our third newsletter and it is packed with good news, it is packed with upbeat stories and wonderful contributions from people who are focussed on how they can assist. There has been a new development and some of our locomotives have been saved by overseas buyers who have chosen to purchase them with a single objective in mind, i.e. their long-term survivability.

We encourage people who have a similar mindset to contact SIA because we do want the commercial transactions to be fair and for not only fair value to be acquired but also to make sure that the purchase of locos is appropriate in terms of their priorities. There are still a lot more locos waiting to be saved than there are people who are prepared to write out a cheque to acquire them. However the trend is definitely upward.

Finally, we have launched our fundraising campaign which will be very well managed by professionals to ensure total transparency and total control of the funds. Our programmes are all funds dependent. It costs over R100,000 to move a medium sized Main Line locomotive a relatively short distance and it is the lack of funds and the high cost in moving them in particular that has been a major factor in seeing so many locomotives go to the scrap man. We are however addressing this issue on an hourly basis nationally.

Please contact me. I would love to hear from you.

Yours,
Dave Richardson
Executive Director
Steam in Action

SAR & H Centenary

Over the next few pages you will see various snippets of the 100 pager SAR & H Centenary Booklet, images of railway and road heritage we just had to share ...




1860 1960

'n Eeu van Diens

A Century of Service




A hundred years ago


Connoisseur's train

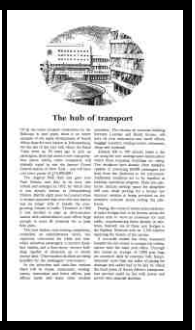




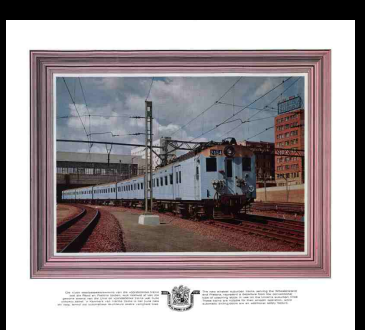

The man with the hammer


Double tracks for intensive traffic


The men behind the scenes


The hub of transport





Letters from our Members

UK REQUEST:

Pete Harding writes:

"After the trip last year I bought a load on books on the SA Steam Railway Locomotives and some old magazines. Two of the books I have managed to obtain are "Steam Locomotives of South Africa Vols 1 & 2 by D F Holland", in one of the magazines it was reported that after numerous discussions on a website that a correction was published to correct errors in the original books.

Have tried to obtain in the UK but to no avail, any chance that you could have a word with our friends in SA to see if any of the steam buffs have a copy which they could either photocopy or provide as an electronic scan."

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERESTS:

David Benn sent us this email:

"Three suggestions for promoting Steam Photography:

1. I have a Fellowship of the Photographic Society of South Africa which was awarded for 36 slides of Steam Locomotives. I would be very happy to have prints made of these and display them in an exhibition in the Station Building at Sandstone Estates for the Steam & Cosmos Festival. In addition I suggest that we have a limited and signed edition of prints for sale at the event as a fund raiser for Steam In Action. I would have the prints for sale mounted, but not framed.

2. To the best of my knowledge Dee Worman has for sale CDs of Derrek's superb recording of Steam Locomotives. Would it not be a good idea to have these for sale both at the Cosmos event, and on the Website?

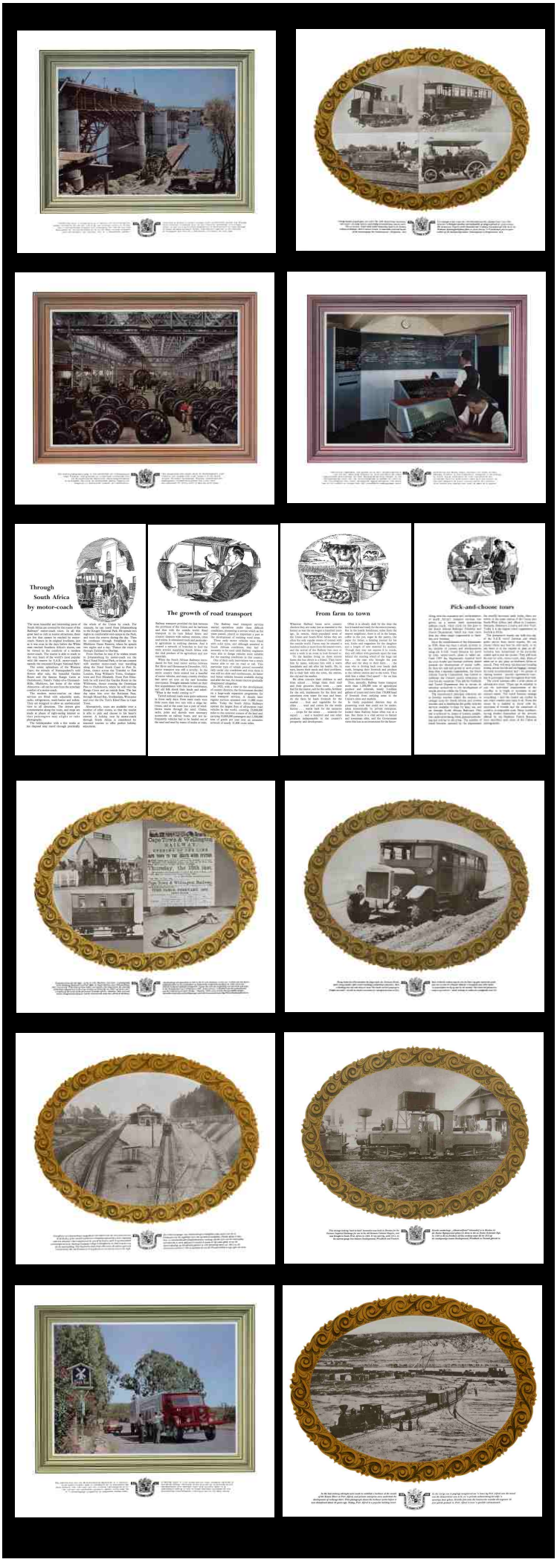
3. I have long intended to have published a book of photographs of Steam Locomotives in the mould of The Great Steam Trek. I intend to invite other photographers to submit photographs as I feel that the photographs of one photographer can become monotonous. I have sorted most of the slides and have started to write the book. Would Steam In Action be willing, with me, to approach a publisher (such as Struik) to publish such a book? This would probably be more effective than an individual approach to them. I would also suggest that a percentage of the profits be donated to Steam In Action.

This third suggestion is obviously something that does not need immediate attention, but I do need some deadlines to complete this project.

I think that Steam In Action is a wonderful initiative, and I sincerely hope that your influence can extend to the Southern Cape which still has the potential for wonderful Steam operations. Even if the George-Knysna Line is never re-opened, the route up the Oteniqua Pass is one of the most spectacular in the country.

Wishing you great success.
With kind regards,

David Benn"





A David Benn Classic

SIA launches DE2 Project

Shaun Ackerman for Reefsteamers reports:

Last year as covered in the news letter, Steam in Action coordinated the move of the ex Rhodesian Railways/Zimbabwe Railways ClassDE2 diesel electric no. 1207 from Ficksburg in the Eastern Free State, home of the Sandstone Heritage Trust and owners of the locomotive, to Reefsteamers in Germiston.

The DE2 was purchased by the SHT more than ten years ago from the National Railways of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesian Railways) for preservation in South Africa. The diesel was then moved with the cooperation of Zim Rail and Spoornet and dead hauled to her new home in the Eastern Free State, where it was placed in storage in the fully enclosed and secure complex adjacent to Ficksburg station where the SHT keeps all of it's potentially operable steam and diesel locomotives and mainline rolling stock.

The DE2 was built by English Electric at the Dick Kerr Works in Preston in England in 1955 for the Rhodesian Railways. It was withdrawn from service in 1992 with a total mileage of 2, 506, 938 miles on the clock. It was originally fitted with a EE16SVT MK1 V16 turbocharged engine rated at 2000hp @ 850rpm at sea level. With the allowance for altitude this was effectively 1710hp. It appears to have been re-engined with an ex BR class 40 (D200) series EE16SVT MK2 engine in 1980 or '81 although it is not registered as such in the Rhodesian Railways records. The difference is that the MK1 has a twin crankcase and the MK2 a single crankcase and only 8 where so equipped, 1206, 1211, 1212, 1218, 1220, 1222, 1225, 1232

The next step was to have the highly dangerous asbestos insulation professionally removed so as to make the locomotive safe for visitors to see. The asbestos was removed and the DE2 declared safe! Having been preserved it was found that more important other projects at the time would be undertaken and so a year or two went by until the SHT decided to have the locomotive assessed. Who could we call on with enough knowledge to assess such an old British built ex Rhodesian Railways diesel? Without a doubt, Chappie Murray, who had many years experience on them on the Rhodesian Railways during his time there.

Media Coverage

STEAM RAILWAY UK ARTICLE:

This article appeared in the November/December issue of Steam Railway UK.



In the Picture

Charters push the boundaries as WHR marches onward

Above: With Llyn y Gader in the background, Prince trundles along the Welsh Highland Railway on November 4.

Right: A train – albeit diesel-hauled – at the Aberglaslyn Pass on November 12.

South African main line steam - campaigners need your support

TV vote on Butterley land

'84030' steelwork arrives for long-term 2-6-2T project

Previous No. 71000 Duke of Gloucester's second tender

Blasts from the Past

This photo taken by Gary Barnes, 1987, is of No 124 on the turntable at Loerie.



Another photo from our archives ...



Chappie subsequently moved to South Africa and is now resident in Witbank working for Sheltam Rail as their Health and Safety Manager. The diesel was assessed throughout except for the undercarriage and bogies as the Ficksburg facility did not have an inspection pit, making such an inspection almost impossible. The V16 turbo charged English Electric engine was found to be in an overall good condition after priming the oil pump and turning over the engine with a pinch bar. It turned freely to which was immediately a very good sign as Chappie just smiled with, I am sure, plenty of memories going through his mind.

A few more years went by and the diesel stood silently again almost in a time warp of its own. Late last year when the Sandstone Heritage Trust, Reefsteamers and Friends of the Rail formed Steam in Action it was decided that all the potentially operational locomotives in the SHT collection at Ficksburg should be moved up to Reefsteamers extensive depot workshops for final assessment and eventually restoration to working order on the mainline. The final decision was made to move the DE2, 25NC no. 3488 and four mainline coaches using the recertified and extensively worked on 15F 3052 owned by our good friend and fellow enthusiast David Shepherd from the UK. The move went off very well and surprisingly smoothly without any hitches. (see story of the move in the previous newsletter) On arrival in Germiston, at the Reefsteamers depot, all the locomotives where shunted into their storage lines and made safe for eventual final inspection.

Chappie Murray was contacted and again agreed to come assist us. A visit is scheduled by him before the end of January so that he can do another more thorough inspection of the whole locomotive again but this time underneath as well. Andrew King, our Chief Engineer at Germiston, and Shaun Ackerman will assist Chappie to do this assessment. Once a conclusion is reached on the diesel and what it will involve to restore it and at what cost we will launch a restoration appeal through SIA to assist in funding the restoration. A decision will also need to be made as to who will carry out the restoration.

Any thoughts from our members will be welcome please.

Please support this initiative so that we can all see and enjoy the sounds of a vintage class DE2 throbbing and whistling it's way down the mainline again!









Photographs courtesy of Shaun Ackerman

News on Avril

David Shepherd, a founding member and avid supporter of SIA, world renowned wild life artist and rail enthusiast and owner of Class 15F 3052 recently wrote to Shaun Ackerman after 3052's first run to Magaliesburg on the 10th February, here's what he had to say:

"Dear Shaun,
So sorry I have not responded sooner but thank you for this message.

I have said it before; I only wish I could come out more often not only to enjoy 'Avril' but to say a huge thanks to all of you for what you are doing,but I am almost certainly coming out for the Cherry Festival.

Now, a little bit which will make you cross; colours of engines and coaches is always the most contentious issue. You evidently like 'Avril'black (!!)but I have to say that I lean slightly towards her original grey smoke deflectors as when presented to me - but we wont fight over it !(but it is my engine !!!)

Keep in touch and sincerest thanks again to you all and have a great day on the 17th!"





Hannes Paling submitted these 2 photos of Avril dating back to 1991/2 at Witput ... Photographs courtesy of Charles Viljoen. Class 15F 3052 with David Shepherd on the footplate at speed, near Kimberley, on her first run after she was presented to David in 1991. Note the grey smoke deflectors!





Class 15F 3052 "Avril" on her first run in 2008 to Magaliesburg - Photographs courtesy of Dave Richardson

Loco News

CLASS 15F NO 3117 RESTORATION:

Nathan Berelowitz from Friends of the Rail reports:

Our main project at the moment is the return to service of 15F number 3117. This locomotive was brought over from Germiston shed after having been withdrawn from service when the steam depot closed.

3117 stood many years awaiting restoration, and it was not until November 2006, that Robin Vice, a retired steam fitter, was flown up from Cape Town, to kick start the project. Thanks to his efforts, the locomotive was partly reassembled enough to enable it to be moved out the shed and onto the pit area of the club. Bearing in mind that FOTR have always been working out in the open, progress has been steady but slow.

Many vital pieces of pipe work have been relocated from their withdrawn 15F number 3094, who has flexible stay problems, and fitted to '17. Lagging in the cab was removed and the odd unnecessary holes were closed up and panelbeated. Extra insulating blankets were fitted, and then the work of respraying the loco and tender took place.

Brothers John and Robert Dadford have been meticulously carrying on, bending, shaping, fitting, removing, bending again,. Refitting and finally fastening, the pipe work, so that it looks like an ex works locomotive.

Many small problems usually found with this type of project, caused delays. The mechanical stoker worm had a damaged universal bolt that had to be replaced. The stoker guide shaft was replaced and the complete tunnel in the tender alongside the worm gear and motor had to be chipped clean of accumulated coal and rust.

This revealed holes in the stoker trough which were then patched and new stoker coal slides were fitted.

The tender has had some modifications done in the coal space. There have been angled plates fitted to the trough sides and rear platform, so as to enable all the coal to fall into the trough instead of laying "dormant "in these spots. Electric light fittings have been fitted under the Fireman's cab floor to enable to keep an eye on the injector operation in poor visibility, and lighting provided under the running board at the front end side to aid the Driver in such lighting conditions.

Work is ongoing and the frame and inside frame have been painted completely. Work on completing the tender frame and wheels, inside and out is ongoing. The buffer will be needle gunned clean and painted and then the fire hydrant fittings will be coupled up, to enable water to be taken whilst the locomotive is under wires.

In the Firebox, much work has been carried out in closing up any open spaces that could lead to live coals exiting and causing line side fires, whilst the hand shaker grate pull rods have been examined and rebushed. The fire bars are to be coupled up, the pull rods tested and set, and then the tender can be united.

Upcoming Events

STEAM AND COSMOS FESTIVAL:

Sandstone Heritage Trust is holding the Steam and Cosmos Festival from 9 to 13 April 2008 ... click here to view flyer.





THE FREE STATE EXPLORER:

To coincide with the Sandstone Heritage Trust Steam and Cosmos Festival from 9th to 13th April 2008, Steam in Action will be running a special train from Johannesburg to Ficksburg and return for members to attend this event ... click here to view flyer.

Downunder Distributors

We received the following email from Australia:

"Good Morning,

I am enquiring about the possibility of Train Pictures acting as a distributor or reseller of your products in Australia. Just recently I viewed "Song of the Rails", a sensational production! If this video is anything to go by, Sandstone Estate must nothing short of spectacular.
We feel there is a good market in this country for all of your products and would like the opportunity to discuss distribution options with you.

We sell to retail customers via mail order and e-commerce plus we also distribute at wholesale to many major outlets. Information about Train Pictures can be found at www.trainpictures.com.au.

Please reply to this email with your contact details so we may begin discussions. I look forward to your reply.

Kind Regards,

Benjamin Page

Director
Production & Project Development
www.trainpictures.com.au

Smoke deflector nameplates from 3094 "City Of Pretoria" will be fitted and the loco will carry a name. The cab side plates have been made as a donation, and manufactured in a resin compound, painted and done up to look as real as the real thing.



Photograph of the loco having been moved in the yard by Class 24 No 3664 (on the right of 3117)



The stoker worm drive universal joint showing a very rusty securing bolt that needed replacement



The smokebox door has been cleaned and painted with a high heat paint. Soon the rest of the smokebox will receive the same treatment



The tender was sandblasted and now that the primer coat is on, respraying continues. The loco has had first coats on and more to follow



As good as any coppersmiths work, the beautiful lines of annealed piping lie freshly on the boiler of 3117. You can clearly see how bakelite spacers have been placed behind the pipe clamps to prevent the accumulation of soot which would eventually lead to rust damage. It also makes pipe polishing an easier task.

A Trip Down Memory Lane with Leith Paxton

Leith Paxton is well known as a rail historian and as the co-author with David Bourne of "Locomotives of the South African Railways" first published in 1985 and now somewhat of a collector's item. Leith has a great interest in the Lawley locomotives and after the move of the James Hall example to Sandstone he sent us the following notes:

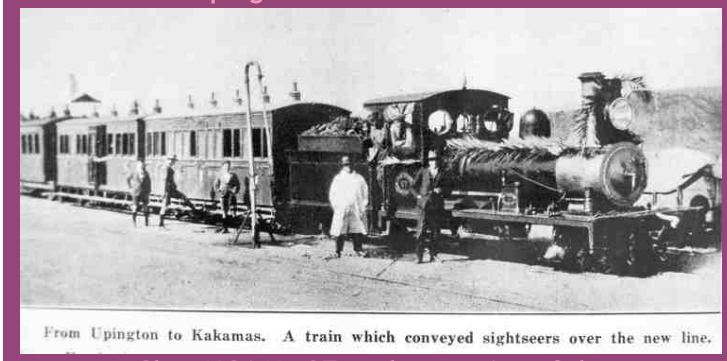
"Armed with the confirmation that the James Hall Lawley is in fact 97, I last night scanned these two photos from my collection. I hope they are of use to you.

In case you do not have details of her working life, this is the way we see it. She (along with No.96 and 98) were rebuilt at Salt River and entered service on the Hopefield line June, 1915. Within a year they proved unsuitable for the demands of the line and were sent back to Salt River and stored. In late 1924/early 1925 she along with No.101 and 106 enjoyed a new lease of life with the start of construction of the Upington-Kakamas branch. They appear to have coped with the traffic until the arrival of the three class NG9 in 1930 from the Avontuur. No.97 was sold to the Zebediela Estates 5 April,1929.

Interesting that she is again working together with her Upington stable mate No.106 also now at Sandstone".



Class NG6 No 97 during the construction of the Upington-Kakamas Line 1926



From Upington to Kakamas. A train which conveyed sightseers over the new line.

Class NG6 No 97 at the opening of the Upington-Kakamas Line 1926

Leith was also an avid fan of the PE narrow gauge and sent us a number of shots of Sandstone's Class NG15's no: 17 and no: 19 working on the line in the 1960's.

Truly steam in action!

Saved SAR15F in Scotland

John Messner, Curator, Transport and Technology, Museum of Transport, Glasgow wrote this story:

"On August 24th 2007, the people of Glasgow, Scotland, woke up to find a steam locomotive in the middle of their city. Resting proudly in George Square, just outside the City Chambers, sat the 15F class locomotive 3007 of the South African Railways. It is one of the thousands of locomotives that had been built in the city and then exported across the globe. It was built by the North British Locomotive Company in 1945, and used in South Africa until 1988. 3007 had been installed in George Square to highlight the launch of a public funding appeal for the new Riverside Museum of Transport, now being built and planned to open in 2011.

Glasgow Museums had been looking to acquire an exported locomotive for some time. Glasgow was once the locomotive building capital of Europe and the inclusion of a locomotive built for export would allow the museum to tell the story of the impact the people of Glasgow had on the railways of the world. It also allows for millions of people to learn about the history of steam in South Africa; people who may not normally be able to travel around the globe to see the remaining working locomotives.

The search for a locomotive included looking into what locomotives were still available in South America, Pakistan and South Africa. We focussed on South Africa when we found out a number of locomotives were about to be sold for scrap. 3007 had sat in Bloemfontein yard since coming out of service and was in good condition after all those years. Glasgow Museums was able to purchase the locomotive from Transnet and bring it to Glasgow as part of the Riverside Museum project.



3007 hoisted by crane from the hold of the ship MV Vega onto dry land at Immingham Docks, July 2007. Not a job for the faint hearted!



3007 soon after arrival in the UK

The saving of 3007 from the cutters' torch was a long and complicated process. We have had fantastic amounts of help from people eager to help see part of the history of Glasgow and South African steam saved. It's encouraging to meet people with such a passion for a subject. Some of those who have helped are now members of Steam in Action and I would like to congratulate and thank the group on coming together to help preserve this part of the important history of railways in South Africa.



Class NG15 No 19 at Port Elizabeth 1966



Class NG15 No 17 at Thornhill 1963



Class NG15 No 17 at Van Staden Station 1963



Class NG15 No 19 at Humewood Road 1966

3007 is now stored in Glasgow ready for the next stage of the long journey of preservation. The next step is to complete a full survey of the locomotive to establish exactly what needs to be done to prepare it for display. This process will be conducted at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre and is due to start later this year. We're also researching the history of 3007. We're looking for any and all information on 3007, such as history of its working life, depots where it was based, photographs, etc. If any members of Steam in Action have any information on 3007, I would be immensely grateful if they could contact me at john.messner@csglasgow.org

I wish Steam in Action and its members success in all their endeavours to help preserve the railway history of South Africa."



The people of Glasgow will have a shock when they wake up...



The locomotive was moved in at 4am, surprising some late night clubbers in the city centre.



The locomotive was on display for three days, attracting thousands of visitors and wide media coverage



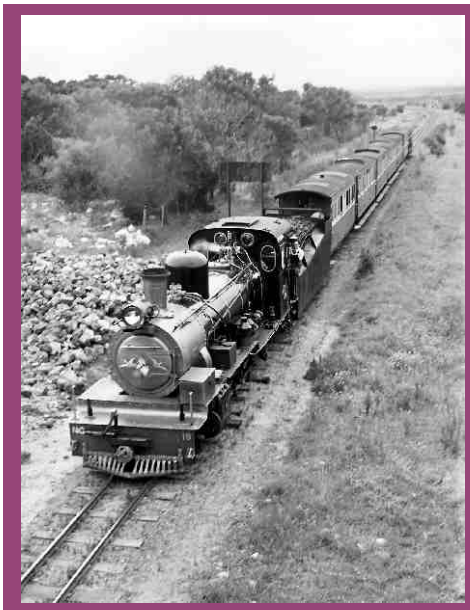
An artist's impression of the new Riverside Museum of Transport where 3007 will be one of the star objects.

NBL Newsletter

The North British Locomotive Preservation Group ...

"As you will see, we have a number of active projects at the present time and are making some good progress. Further details are on our website : www.nbloco.net"

Click here to read NBL's February Newsletter



Class NG15 No 19
at Port Elizabeth

All photographs courtesy of Leith Paxton

Our thanks to Leith for these wonderful memories of our rail heritage.

Carbon Footprints

A dialogue is developing around the world regarding the merits or otherwise of burning coal and generating smoke for photographic purposes during steam train excursions etc. In some very ecologically aware countries like Germany they are very focussed on reducing carbon emissions.

We all need to think about this because it is quite likely that these sentiments will grow and be reinforced with ever more people taking a view on the subject. We have done no technical research into this matter and we are simply reporting our perceptions. We were wondering if SIA members had any thoughts on this?

The Face Behind Bars ... um I mean Behind the Name ...



Please meet Elize Lubbe,
our Cute Chairman of Reefsteamers!

Port Elizabeth Narrow Gauge Update

The Avontuur Line is on everyone's minds these days because it is the longest Narrow Gauge Railway in the world. We have received a statement with the kind authority of Pierre Voges, Chief Executive Officer of the Mandela Bay Development Corporation. Pierre points out the following:

"The Mandela Bay Development Agency is working in the areas of urban renewal and port development. You have probably noticed the development in Port Elizabeth in respect of property development (after a 20-year fairly dormant period).

- The Narrow Gauge (running from Port Elizabeth to Avontuur in the Western Cape) is an asset not on our balance sheet, but that of Spoornet .
- The Narrow Gauge is not part of our Agency Mandate
- As the Humewood station is part of the port and city area, a full business plan (done by Grant Thornton International Chartered Accountants) has been developed towards the end of 2007
- The business plan will now be used to engage Spoornet and the provincial Department of Transport
- The line has not been abandoned. Seeing that you are in the rail business (which we are not) I will appreciate some advice in how to expedite the matter
- It was due to the lack of a plan and a way forward that the Business Plan was developed at a cost of R280 000.

I trust that this response meets with your requirements." .

SIA and HRASA Update

A good strong working relationship between the two parties is progressing, and lots of things are happening.

We will have more detailed information in March's newsletter ...

Visit our Founding Members

