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Your comments, queries and suggestions are always welcome!

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Steam in Action - An Association
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www.steam-in-action.com

From the Ed

Welcome to our August Newsletter. It's hard to believe that Steam in Action is almost a year old!

Whilst we have number of achievements to our name the Millsite Saga still drags on. SIA has not made any recent announcements on this issue as we had agreed with HRASA and Transnet to make one statement. This statement was to be made on Friday 8th August as the agreement for handing the assets over from Transnet to HRASA was signed on Monday 4th August where the SIA Executive Director was present. Such a statement has not been forthcoming so we feel bound to raise the issues ensuing from this. In fact we have delayed the Newsletter in the hope that this would be released by the end of August, it has not, so our apologies for a late delivery this month.

Although SIA has received documents from HRASA indicating that we may begin moving locos and equipment from Millsite (and Humewood Road, although this is for narrow gauge items specific to Sandstone Heritage Trust) SIA does not feel that such documentation is sufficient for the task in hand.

We have had sight of the agreement signed between HRASA and Transnet but we do not know on what basis we accept the assets and there are no agreements in place between HRASA and anyone as to the terms and conditions of further custodianship of the assets. Is it a lease lend or another type of agreement? To commence any movement without such basic legalities in place would be reckless.

Also important is that without a release from either location on a Transnet letterhead we feel that we still would run the risk of arrest or security action as it is unlikely that the rank and file at Transnet have any idea who HRASA is! As has become the norm, no information has been forthcoming from the Chair at HRASA, in fact HRASA members have been in contact with SIA for information!

It is on this basis that we have taken no action to move locomotives although SIA has visited Millsite and Humewood Road to document the dispositions of the assets in preparation for any movement. We have a new deadline of November 10th 2008 which is approaching fast.

We have been in contact with HRASA regarding the documentation but we have received no response as we go to press.

Given that Transnet will not officially deal with SIA and redirects us to HRASA always, we are unable to take immediate action on the Millsite move.

We have also asked Transnet for assistance with locomotives and the waiving of certain fees for moving the locos, SIA approached Transnet on this over three months ago with no response and we have since redirected this request via HRASA. The outcome you know. This financial assistance is a critical element as the funds we have collected on behalf of our members (just under R80,000) will simply not be sufficient to fulfill the task. SIA has the impression that Transnet treats this matter as having achieved a goal. The assets are now out of their hands and someone else's problem. Has HRASA realized that it is their problem?

Given that we have to move the assets we appeal for further funds from our members. As I mentioned in last months newsletter, the urgency of Millsite has dropped below the radar with our members and other interested parties but we need a lot more money so please help us.

You can donate by clicking here ...

Probably as a result of the Millsite issue we have found that SIA registrations are slowing. We have nearly 600 members but the more we have, the more strength we have, if each member will just recruit one other we will have 1200 supporters!

As always our life with railways goes on and we have some interesting insights to share with you on rail enthusiasm in SA as well as good news from our members.

Enjoy the read.

"We accept the verdict of the past until the need for change cries out loudly enough to force upon us a choice between the comforts of further inertia and the irksomeness of action".

Learned Hand (1872-1961)

Where is all the interest coming from?

We know that many people are interested and indeed many are passionate about steam and the fantastic sensation that one gets when one is in close proximity to working steam locomotives. There is almost nowhere in South Africa where these experiences can be enjoyed, and undoubtedly many of those bold preservation attempts that are clearly documented in the 70's and 80's have long since become extinct. The bulk of the locomotives that were our pride and joy in the early days of steam preservation are now gone.

What is left is either unrestored and in many cases derelict. If one surveys which 3'6" locomotives are currently being rebuilt in South Africa the list is very small.

We only know of Sandstone's 19D which has been completely rebuilt in the Bloemfontein workshops, the upgrades that Reefsteamers are doing selectively on their locomotives (including some from Sandstone), Rovos Rail' 25 NC restoration, a 15F at FOTR plus two 25NC being brought back into service by Steamnet 200 in Kimberley. Ian Pretorius has recently brought a 24 class locomotive back into steam in Cape Town. For the rest we hear stories but we do not see reports with photographs of fitters actually working on Cape Gauge locomotives in this country. The outlook therefore is not that good, i.e. the number of options that people have, appears to be in decline and even non-steam rail experiences like Bushveld Safaris which was well run and beautifully motivated by Boon Boonzaaier have faded away.

Now we come to the dilemma. There appears to be significant interest and significant demand. However it appears that the steam preservation industry, if you like to call it that, does not know how to convert that interest into rands and cents. Rovos Rail certainly knows how to do it at the top end of the market and they are to be applauded. However, when it comes to the broader public and the international visitor who is not in a position to pay thousands and thousands of Dollars, Pounds or Euros for a short steam train ride, the position is much more confusing.



Will these historical locomotives ever be moved?

Left: Class 5B 723 and Right: Class 10C 772

Obviously SIA is in touch with most of the key players and they really fall into two groups. The top management of the Heritage Rail Association of Southern Africa (HRASA) are passive in this area because most of their members have no direct involvement with steam locomotives on a day-to-day basis and represent organizations that do not all offer regular steam excursions. If they do, they tend to be only marginally profitable. Therefore HRASA is not going to be the catalyst that is going to expand the enjoyment and participation footprint as it were within the world of steam.

If one analyses what is left then the position becomes rather simple to define - there isn't much. Reefsteamers are certainly seeing a growth in traffic and have got some very innovative programmes to work with local government and other organisations to improve the number of rail tourism experiences which are on offer. Examples include a donation from Ekurhuleni Municipality to upgrade their coaches for tourist trains originating in the area and a working relationship with Shongololo Express to store their coaching stock and position them at the various departure points for their rail tours.

Apart from Friends of the Rail and Umgeni Steam railway who send us limited information, the only other player that is prepared to send us regular updated reports and statistics is the Sandstone Heritage Trust in the remote Eastern Free State. They are the first to admit that they do not offer a formal tourist experience because they do not operate tourist trains but have always been amenable to providing an experience for well defined groups who state clearly what they would like to do. During a conversation with Hester Papenfus, the Estate PRO, last week she confirmed that the BMW Motorcycle Club, the Italian Sports Car Club, a large group of farmers from SENWES, as well as school groups and other interested parties had all asked if they could be accommodated on certain dates. Sandstone has considered this matter in great detail and feels that if it can improve the awareness of the plight of South Africa's Rail Preservation programme, and if by giving people an enjoyable experience they could go out and add to the constituency of supporters, then it is worth pursuing. Hester confirmed that there was a dramatic increase in the number of people who were interested in seeing Narrow Gauge locomotives operating at close quarters.

This is probably as a result of the documentary on the popular “Pasella” programme in Afrikaans aired on SABC 2 in late July, that opened many people’s eyes to what was happening in the Eastern Free State. Be that as it may we at SIA have confirmed that there is real interest but that we are facing the challenge of how to meet it and how to make it financially viable so that it actually contributes to the well-being of the sector that it represents.

The answer appears to be in cooperation between the parties. The Cherry Festival trains to the Eastern Free State are a good example. The guest of honour on the train down to Ficksburg and back is David Shepherd, the world renowned wildlife artist. David’s 15F, No. 3052, Avril, will be one of the working locomotives on the train and he is extremely excited about the possibility of participating in all aspects of this particular trip. He has been a regular visitor to Sandstone over the years and so Sandstone is also going to lay on a special programme for him, to which a number of other VIP’s will be invited. David brings his prestige and celebrity status to a train journey that could be repeated many times over if there was the marketing creativity and the drive to implement it. Of course there are the usual obstacles, such as whether or not the national rail authorities will cooperate on the day, but professionals like Reefsteamers have learnt to deal with that and have learnt to deal with it successfully and effectively. Ironically it is all in the interests of the country and therefore it is hard to believe that any South African would obstruct it.

Finally, there is much talk but little action on the question of to what extent will the World Cup football event in 2010 aid or abet what we are trying to do? Certainly the key players have put their best foot forward and have invited the authorities to work with them but the response from government has been quite simple - unless you are black economic empowered we are not going to deal with you. That is a sad situation because the organizations are almost without exception, Section 21 non-profit companies and no black economic investor would consider investing in something that starts out as being non-profit orientated and which is compelled by its articles of association to stay that way.

Interestingly 2010 is also the centenary of South African Railways and 150 years since the first railway in South Africa in 1860 between Durban and The Point. A milestone which Transnet Freight Rail seem determined to ignore.

To summarise therefore it is very clear that there are two groundswells developing here. The first is an improving awareness in terms of popular support and interest in steam and in South Africa’s rail heritage as shown by an increasingly diverse number of organizations that are popping up on e-mail every day asking for details as to how they can join in the fun. On the other hand we have got resentment and obstructionism occurring in many of the government and parastatals who, under normal circumstances, would be the development catalyst for further advancement of tourism and business development, particularly in the more remote rural areas where high unemployment exists. Will the popular groundswell overrule and eventually brush aside the endemic obstructionism that exists at the level where people supposedly control what happens on the ground. Sandstone’s recent decision to distance themselves from the formal representative structures is a good example of what any commercial organization would do if it found that its industry representative body was acting in a manner which curtailed rather than developed the core industry in which it was involved.

The fact is that we can put programmes together, we do want to see visitors, we can and will arrange for them to be well received, and SIA is more than happy to act as a coordinator for this process. We know that we have a diminishing resource but we believe that SIA might ultimately turn the ship around and in order to do that, we need more passengers on board.

Please contact me if I can be of assistance.

Dave Richardson



Top Photograph: Class 5R 781
Middle Photograph: Class 24 3645
Bottom Photograph: Class A103

TFHP - Transnet Foundation for Heritage and Preservation

As we move forward in preservation it seems the time has come to say goodbye to this organization in its present form.

In a number of meetings with TFHP it has become abundantly clear the neither rail Heritage nor rail Preservation is part of their future plans. In a recent communication to SIA it was made very clear that Rail Tourism has little space on their agenda and that preservation has now been passed to the private sector. Steam locomotives are now HRASA's problem, the Centenary of the Railways in 2010 is of no interest so we welcome TF! The Transnet Foundation for?

To answer this question have a look at <http://www.transnet.co.za/TnetFoundation.aspx>

Rail activities are conspicuously absent!

Saving our Narrow Gauge

Although a number of narrow gauge assets are included in the recent handover to HRASA, Transnet recently issued a tender for a large number of wagons in the Port Elizabeth area. Unfortunately many of these wagons appearing on the tender also appear on the HRASA list for lease lend which has produced some confusion!

Sandstone Heritage Trust has taken the initiative here and as well as applying for a number of lease lend items has also tendered for a number of wagons.

As with all tenders it is very much a “voetstoets” exercise so Sandstone's loco foreman, Gert Jubileus, has been to PE to examine what is on offer. A small selection of his photographs illustrates the rather downtrodden state of these wagons.

Although Sandstone is one of three narrow gauge operators in South Africa, there appears to have been no interest from the other two to save a selection of these units. This is probably because they are all freight vehicles and do not fit the Apple Express and Paton passenger profile. Nevertheless they are worthy of preservation and we will keep you posted on the outcome of the tender in future issues.



Sick Bay

We are sad to report that Nerina Skuy of HRASA and Les Smith of Reefsteamers have both been suffering health problems of late. On behalf of Steam in Action and all our members we wish them both a speedy recovery. Steam in Action has sent both Nerina and Les a small gift from our members to help bring them back to full pressure.

We are thinking of you.

Concern from A Member

The perceived dissent in South African rail preservation prompted Phil Mortimer (UK), who owns Class NGG16 No: 141, to put pen to paper:

“As the new owners of the NGG16 Garrett (141) we seem to have stumbled into a hornets nest of diverse and conflicting interests purporting to be supportive of the general interests of steam railways, locomotives and their general well being in SA`. This has come as a bit of a shock although our experience of the preservation scene in the UK should perhaps have alerted us to possible bear traps. Acquiring a derelict loco (albeit a unique one with a lot of indigenous engineering and design features developed to make the performance of the locomotives even more remarkable) from afar might appear to be a lunatic thing to have done but our interest in steam is such that the opportunity to acquire it has moved on and the loco is now, thankfully, at The Sandstone Estate in safe keeping and awaiting restoration. It will happen, of that there is no doubt.

What is concerning is that the position amongst the steam interests in SA seems to be developing into an internecine war. This is worrying in that it could lead to a loss of momentum in encouraging the safeguarding of locos and other assets in real danger of being scrapped (once gone, that's it) and this could be a tragedy. SA has a pool of locos (we have interests in acquiring another to be kept in country) and other equipment which need to be preserved, restored and safeguarded as national artifacts and as a very positive base to the development of tourism. Railway tourism is big business in the UK (I was at the Mid Hants earlier this week and it was heaving) and various agencies of government (national & local) have recognized this. It has taken some time for this position to emerge and it too could all have been lost. Calmer council ultimately prevailed and despite some bruised egos there now seems to be a much more responsible, responsive and mature take on ways forward in relation to the operation of heritage lines and the operation of trains on the national rail infrastructure (The 40th anniversary of the formal end of steam was celebrated this week with a Britannia Pacific strutting its stuff almost coincidental with the first move of the new A1 Tornado). None of this would have been possible or imagined some years ago but does demonstrate how far the active steam preservation interests have come and are prepared to work together (my emphasis). Sure there are things that go wrong but in general the overall position has matured in the best interests of steam and railway preservation.

It may be that being somewhat removed (12000 miles) from the scene of things we are gifted with clarity to look at the position in SA and wonder what on earth is going on. It cannot be in the best interests of steam to be indulging in ludicrous spats when what is needed is a closing of ranks to protect the future interests of steam railways. A recent blueprint put forward a series of well founded and robust ideas as to what is needed to achieve this but this appears to have attracted a hail of criticism and aggressive comment. The alternative is to continue with a disaggregated approach leading to a dilution of impact and loss of impact. The real risk is that priceless assets and artifacts will be gone. Then the real blame game and acrimony will start but it will be too late. We have sent messages to various organizations for guidance and advice in relation to our little (rusty) red engine. With a few notable exceptions we have received nothing but a wall of silence which is, in my view, rude, amateurish and just bad practice. There is a need for a much more robust and business like approach to all of this that the present structures and organizations seem unwilling or unable to adopt. Prevarication and infighting will lead to a loss of support, interest and ultimately the key items of kit we are keen to see preserved and returned to use. There is a huge market for steam which needs to be tapped in a professional and competent way. This is vital if there is to be investment by sponsors (government & commercial) in the future of steam.

SA has a unique position in that it has locomotives and rolling stock that are unique and world class. Crass stupidity, intransigence and other foot-dragging is something that needs to be kicked into the long grass. On a recent visit I was struck at the sheer scale of the potential for steam activities that could be liberated if interests could be pooled and a robust strategy for the future is developed and agreed by all interested parties. I'm sure even now we will have upset someone by committing these ideas to paper. Well if we have fired the first shots in the war so be it. We believe we have a clear strategy to get our loco back into shape and operating and to keep it in SA where it was built and to act as a beacon to attract world wide interest in steam traction. There is room inside the tent for an array of interests to develop in harmony. Surely this is what is needed.”



The Mortimer's NGG16 No: 141 after delivery to Sandstone. Photo courtesy of Gert Jubileus.

2010 - More than just Football!

While 2010 may be the World Cup year in most minds in South Africa, it is also a significant milestone in our rail history. 150 years since the first public railway and 100 years since the formation of South African Railways (now Transnet) in 1910 when the Union of South Africa came into being.

Although the history of rail in South Africa may be well known to many of our readers, I am sure that equally a large number would be interested in a potted version.

The first steam locomotive came to South Africa in 1859 for the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company although it was not the first locomotive to operate on a public railway. This honour is claimed by The Natal Railway Company in 1860 with a line between Durban and The Point. Both lines being constructed to 4'8 1/2" gauge. The question of gauge was an endless debate as a narrower gauge would have saved construction costs by following the contours of the land. Another private railway had been built to 2'6" gauge in the north western Cape to carry copper to the coast. In 1873 the Cape Parliament appointed a select committee to consider a suitable gauge for future rail development, their decision of 3'6" (the Cape Gauge) was a compromise between the two existing gauges.

By 1874 all the private railways around Cape Town were taken over by the colony under the Auspices of Cape Government Railways (CGR) while in Natal in 1878 the provincial authorities absorbed the Natal Railway Company to form Natal Government Railways (NGR). As the frontiers of South Africa were pushed inland railway development kept pace. With the discovery of gold in the Transvaal the CGR extended its line across the Orange Free State Border to the Transvaal border. In 1897 the line was taken over by the Orange Free State Government Railways (OVGS). The NGR was also heading for the Transvaal.

President Kruger was insistent that his Boer republic remain independent from the British and created the NZASM system with a line to Delagoa Bay (Maputo) from Pretoria. Another independent line was built from Pretoria to Pietersburg (Polokwane) but soon afterwards the Anglo-Boer War began and all captured lines were incorporated into the Imperial Military Railways (IMR).

With peace in 1902 this entire network became the Central South African Railways (CSAR) and by 1910 with the formation of the Union of South Africa all the individual systems were incorporated into South African Railways (SAR).

The SAR absorbed the various harbour board railways in Natal and the Cape and by 1922 the lines of the former German colony of South West Africa (Namibia) we brought into the SAR.



The last private railway to be taken into the SAR was the New Cape Central Railway (NCCR) between Worcester and Mossel Bay in 1925. The SAR went forward to become acknowledged as one of the best rail systems in the world and the Cape Gauge spread throughout Africa.

In 1981 the railway administration was renamed South African Transport Services (SATS) and by 1988 Spoornet was formed to be renamed Transnet Freight Rail in 2008.

So in 2010 we will have two milestones to celebrate. As SIA has had a nil response from Transnet on enquiring what there plans were we may have to go it alone. It looks as though some form of country wide steam special may be a bridge too far but who knows. SIA would love to hear from you on any ideas you might have to celebrate these anniversaries.

SIA will continue to lobby Transnet for a response on this but let's get some action going!

Timeless Inchanga

Steam Preservation is not just about the Steam Locomotive. It's about everything that was part of the railway scene during the steam era when life was more leisurely, unrushed and of solid railway engineering where everything was built to last, not like the throw away society we live in today.

In the attached picture, besides 3BR 1486 of 1912 vintage, can be seen part of the beautiful early 20th Century architecture (A legacy of the 19th Century) which was a hall mark of the then Natal Government Railways represented and preserved in the building which is Inchanga Station today.

The clock in the picture is a piece of the history of the old coal fired Umgeni Power Station at New Germany where Umgeni Steam Railway started 26 years ago. The clock was located in the main hall between the boiler and steam turbine houses.

In the right foreground is the hand operated water pump which came from the Escort - Weenen narrow gauge line of Billy Bester fame. The pump was used to fill the front water tank of the diminutive NGG 13 & 16 Garratts that operated on the line. No doubt early smaller tender locomotives would have been replenished in similar fashion by the use of the pump.



Other items in the picture, awaiting restoration are two station platform barrows and an old bench off of an unknown Natal station.

Inchanga Station and what Umgeni Steam Railway is in the process of achieving stands as a tribute to the early Railway pioneers of this Country.

In 2010, on 26 June, railways in South Africa will turn 150 years old! Wouldn't it be a fitting tribute to that date to celebrate the first train to run in South Africa from the Point to Market Square, Durban with the "Natal" with the return to Steam of Kitson Locomotive "Kitty" (representative of the first locomotive class to make the journey to Pietermaritzburg in 1880), our Dubs A No 88 and the 3BR together with a collection of balcony coaches representative of the early 1900s all parading along the Victoria Embankment!

It would be great if the whole railway fraternity, including Transnet Management, Transnet Freight Rail and Shozaloza Mail & Metro Rail would enter into the occasion especially since the Soccer World Cup will be in progress at the time!

The event would no doubt attract a few die hard overseas enthusiasts as well. A few steam trains running on the Steel Kyalami as well as at other centres around the country???

We have the equipment, we just need the will, the hands AND the funds to do this.

I leave you with this quote from former Mayor of Durban, Councillor Sybil Hotz, "A man without a history, is like a man without a memory".

Andy Anderson
Umgeni Steam Railway

Movie Review

STEAM ON DVD

The late Tom Stanton filmed steam in action all over South Africa and produced an enormous amount of footage which has now been converted to DVD by Richard Gillatt. There are a number of titles of which Richard has sent through this one for review.

Number 18: FREE STATE STEAM:

The first quarter of this DVD is of the Kroonstad - Bloemfontein line. Filmed in August 1975. We start by following Class 23 number 2561 at the head of the Drakensberg Express from Kroonstad to Bloemfontein. We then watch Class 23's, 25NC's and 15F's working both freight and passenger trains on this section of line. There are two short scenes of a Class 25 Condenser at the head of a freight near Bloemfontein. The second quarter is of this same section but filmed 4 months later in December 1975. This also starts off by following Class 23 number 2561, again at the head of the Drakensberg Express. We spend a bit of time watching the passing parade of super power on the Karee Bank. The second half was filmed in July 1983 on the Bethlehem - Bloemfontein line. This must have been some special weekend as in some scenes you can see other photographers catching the action. We concentrate mainly on the daily passenger workings with a short break to follow 19D's on the Winburg - Theunissen and Modderpoort - Ladybrand branch lines. Total viewing time : 1 hour 40 minutes.

For most of us who are used to modern videography, which tends to capture steam on special workings or at the very end of everyday workings in the early 90's, this DVD is a refreshing change. Apart from Ron Nel's work on film such as Steam Fever, very little I have seen on 8mm or Super 8 has been more than a record of the day with poor production values. Shaky camera work, flashes and flickers have often been the order of the day. Tom Stanton put in a lot of effort with his locations and apart from very flat colour, to be expected on film over 30 years old, the DVD is a worthwhile record of steam in 1975 and 1983.

The sheer volume of traffic on the line between Bloemfontein and Kroonstad has to be seen to be believed. The scenes of the now closed Winburg and Ladybrand branches are also a grand memory of a bygone era.

There are a number of titles available in the series all converted from the original film by Richard Gillatt who has done a superb job in bringing the footage to DVD. The prices vary according to the title but "Free State Steam" costs R175.00 which includes postage and packaging.

I have no hesitation in recommending this video to all steam enthusiasts, although I have not seen the other titles, I know they will all be to the same standard and will add value to any collection (DAVE RICHARDSON)

For any enquiries Richard can be contacted on steamtrainfan@gfisp.co.za or view the website www.locos.co.za.

Club News

REEFSTEAMERS DEPOT REPORTS

Click here to read Part 1 of the latest Depot Report

Click here to read Part 2 of the latest Depot Report

FOTR HERCULES DEPARTURE

Chris Janisch reports:

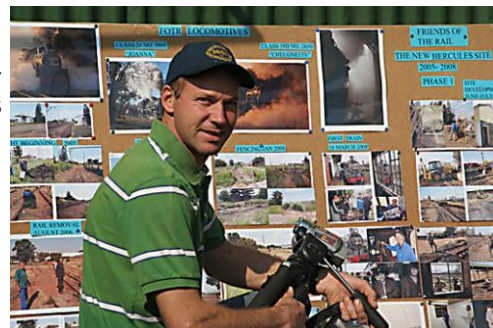
On 27 July 2008, a great milestone in the history of FOTR was reached, when the first public train departed from our new Hercules site. At 1.30pm, Class 24 No 3664 whistled up and steamed out of Hercules on a Tshwane Explorer trip around Pretoria. A great turnout of members greeted the public as they enjoyed the superior departure point, with proper platform and facilities. The last few months had been a flurry of activity, as the "friends", under site foreman John Ashworth, worked hard to get the venue ready for the public.

The first train was crewed by Cliff Petzer and Gabor Kovacs, with Steve Smith and Steve Appleton guard and train manager respectively. Our chairman Nathan Berelowitz celebrated his umpteenth birthday in style on the train. Yours truly supplied a photographic collage detailing the evolution of the site and promoting SIA. A successful outing was the order of the day, and we hope for many more in the future.

This success was only the beginning for the new site. Many challenges lie ahead, as we need to lay track, construct a pit and shed, and expand the facilities. A plan has been drawn up, but the crucial element lacking is funding. We can only develop as fast as the funds allow. For this reason, our move from Capital Park will be in stages. The first priority is to translocate as much rolling stock as possible, then look at laying a new storage line and then the pit. Locos will continue to use Capital Park as a base for the immediate future.

These are exciting and daunting times for the club. We are appealing to anyone or any business who may wish to sponsor us, to contact us. There will be a considerable return for the sponsor through advertising on our trains and site fences/buildings, and website and forum. This- together with the knowledge that you have played a large part in cementing the future of Pretoria's rail heritage- is cause for great satisfaction.

Enquiries can be directed to myself at janisch24@gmail.com.



Chris Janisch



Upcoming Events

RAIL TOURS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

John Batwell informs us ... only two safaris to Zimbabwe this winter ...

Regular operators to Zimbabwe every winter experienced low bookings and cancellations this year, no doubt precipitated by the press about the country and the instability in certain parts of the land. Rovos Rail and FarRail were the only South African and European operators respectively that ventured to the country in recent months and both operators' trains are illustrated here.

NRZ's latest restored Garratt, 15 Class 414, is pictured on the way to the bridge with the FarRail party.

Rovos Rail's 25NCs 3484/42 enter Marula station with a tour train headed for Victoria Falls.



Both photographs courtesy of Christian Cederburg

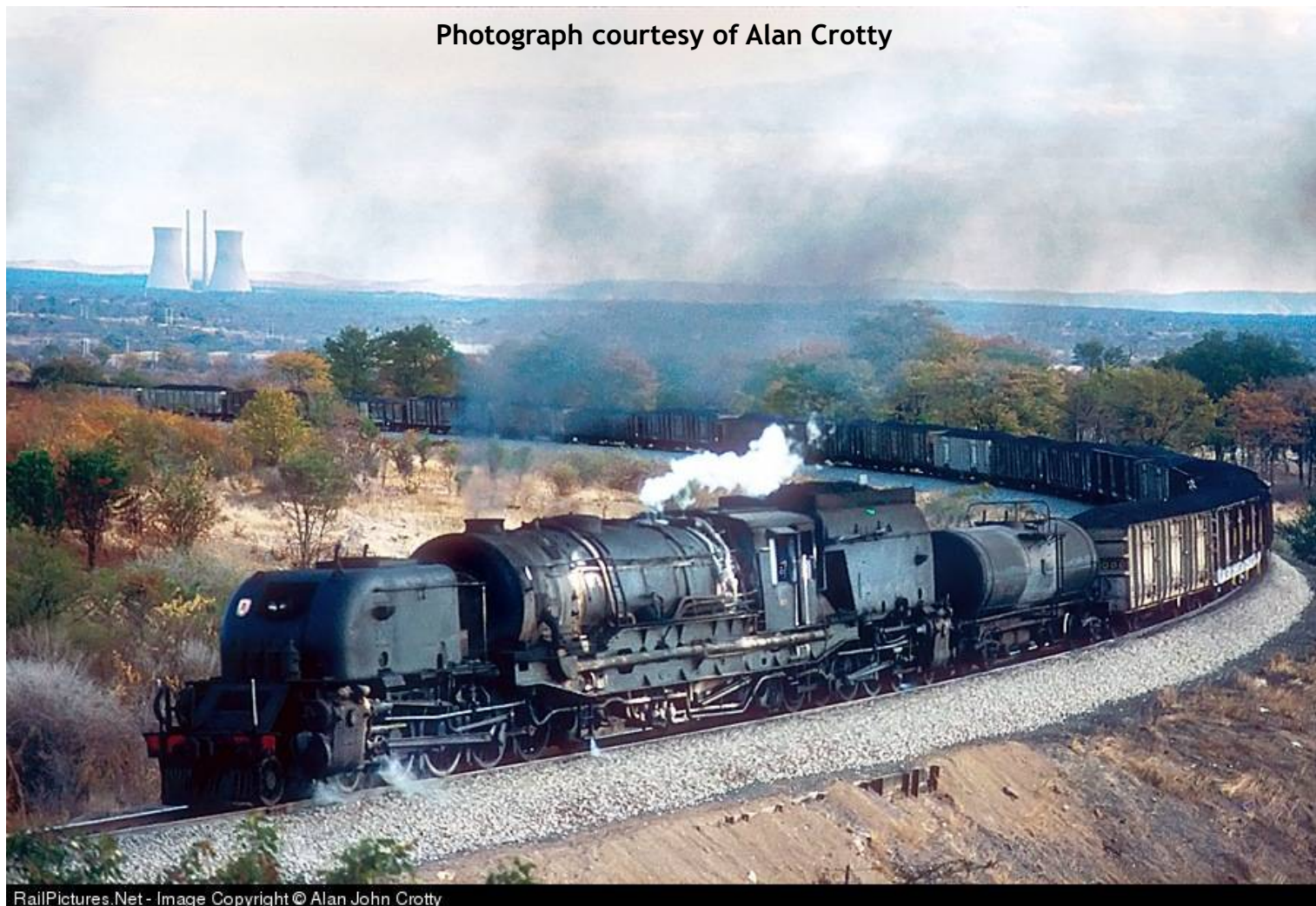
Blast from the Past

ZIM GARRATT

John Batwell writes:

“Between 1979 and 1981, GMAM’s were hired in varying numbers to operate services out of Bulawayo on the steam sections whilst a major Garratt refurbishment programme was in hand - here one of the hired locos heads a Down Line coal train out of Thomson Junction.”

Photograph courtesy of Alan Crotty



RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright © Alan John Crotty

USR 1576

Umgeni Steam Railway sent us this interesting photo:

“Interesting pictures from Michael Dexter, now living in New Zealand, of our 14R “Julie” No.1576 operating with PAX some 15-years ago when we were running from the New Germany Power Station.

Quite poor quality but they have apparently been scanned from some very old slides.”



LOCAL NEWS ON 'O' SCALE MODELS

Bruce Green has produced a stunning 'O' scale model of the Lawley 4-4-0 which he will be putting into production in the future. Bruce sent us the following detail:

"Scale is 7mm to one foot being O scale. The model is 220mm long. 48mm high and height from rail to top of chimney is 71mm. The model runs on 16.5mm gauge track, the popular HO/00 type, but can easily be made to operate on scale 14mm track. Power will come from a Can motor driving a custom built gearbox onto the rear driving axle. The built up model would be as I said limited to 10 models and in a standard finish similar to the preserved NG 97. Collectors wanting any other finish would be welcome to arrange that via myself.

I plan to get the first built models going towards the end of the year and at this stage I haven't worked out an actual price as a lot will depend on the ruling exchange rate as all the wheels motors and gearboxes are imported. My current range of SAR 3' 6" locomotive models sell for between R5500 and R6000 and basically using that as a guide, remember HO scale is half the size of O scale, the models should sell for between R8500 and R9000.

As far as the kit is concerned there will be a good deal of additional work to be done such as writing instructions, so it is planned for some time in the future and depends on the success of the built models."

You can contact Bruce as follows:

P.O. Box 28705 Kensington 2101 SA, Tel 011 614 1443, email inscalemodels@telkomsa.net



NEWS FROM OVERSEAS - 40 YEARS ON, AUGUST 11 2008!

David Rodgers is well known to South African enthusiasts for the many rail tours he has organised to South Africa from the UK. He sent us this report and photos of a significant event in UK preservation.

"40 years ago today BR ran its last steam train - the famous 15 guinea special - from Liverpool to Carlisle and return featuring Black 5 45110 from Liverpool to Manchester and return, 70013 from Manchester to Carlisle and Black 5's 44781 and 44871 from Carlisle to Manchester.

Amazingly 3 of the 4 locos survive but only 70013 was available yesterday's re-enactment although non-mainline certified 45110 was in action on the Severn Valley Railway.

Yesterday saw 8F 48151 take 45110's place from Liverpool - Manchester, then newly restored 70013 Oliver Cromwell from Manchester to Carlisle and Black 5's 45407 + 45231 from Carlisle to Blackburn with 45231 running direct from Blackburn via Wigan to Liverpool (the only variation from the original route) to save time and an engine change.

Unlike 40 years ago when the weather was hot and sunny, yesterday was a mix of high wind, heavy rain and some sun - the latter being very rare! It was absolutely monsoon conditions in Bolton and I was soaked to the skin in minutes. Why is it that summer in the UK is far worse weather than in winter these days? Fortunately (as is so often the case) the weather in the more gentle countryside of the Eden valley north of Appleby was far better and generally fairly sunny.

The load yesterday was 11 maroon liveried coaches unlike an assortment of 10 maroon and the then new blue and grey livery in 1968. Of particular interest is that all locos carried the original 1T57 train reporting code and the nameplates were removed from 70013 revealing the painted name OLIVER CROMWELL as it ran in 1967 and 1968. This has survived restoration intact and the smoke deflectors have just been revarnished!

We didn't bother with the Liverpool - Manchester leg and instead started in the terraced back streets facing Tongue viaduct, Bolton which would not have been out of place in 1968. This is sunny until 5 minutes or so beforehand! We then went to Rimington on the Blackburn - Hellifield section with Pendle Hill dominating the scene. Our final shot of 70013 was at Sheriff Brow bridge, Stainforth - ironically the one shot that was NOT possible in 1968 as this location was ruined by telegraph wires.

After a lunchtime break in good company at the Ribbleshead Inn we decided to head north and hope that the weather would improve north of Appleby. After checking a few positions in the Cumwhinton and Cotehill areas we decided on Armathwaite curve for the return run with the doubleheaded Black 5's. Even here wasn't 100% sun so Julie was dispatched with another camera to Armathwaite station to take a different view.

Unfortunately as we headed south the weather again deteriorated and after watching the train 15 minutes early at Birkett we headed home pleased to have recorded a historic event."



All photographs courtesy of David Rodgers

CLASS A4 PACIFIC 60009

A South African connection, two weeks ago Class A4 pacific 60009 "Union of South Africa" hauled a special from Crewe to Scarborough, the locomotive makes a magnificent sight on the climb to Standedge Tunnel.



Photograph
courtesy of
David Rodgers

Letters from our Members

LETTER ON AMERICAN ACTION

George Clarke sent us this email:

I just thought you might like to know about a recent steam train excursion between Tunkhannock, PA and Jim Thorpe, PA. The trip was sponsored by the Wyoming County United Way as a fund raiser. The steam train (Engine 425 4-6-4 recently restored and belonging to the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad) had 10 1920's passenger cars that were sold out in a matter of days. The train carried 630 passengers on 2 consecutive days for a total of 1260 passengers. The trip was about 75 miles long and took about 4 hours, one way. The passengers visited the town of Jim Thorpe for about 3.5 hours and then returned to Tunkhannock on the 4 hour return trip. I drove ahead of the train on Saturday and was a passenger aboard the train on Sunday. I posted a number of the photographs on my web site at these links.

<http://www.knoteworthykards.com/store/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=41>

<http://www.knoteworthykards.com/store/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=42>

SPARE PARTS

This correspondence is between Jim Summerscales and Shaun Ackerman (Reefsteamers):

“Jim & June Summerscales wrote:

Hi Shaun, my name is Jim Summerscales, a millwright by trade, centuries ago !!! I am retired and live in Pennington, Natal S/coast. I used to work at Denver Metal Works as scrap manager. We used to buy hundreds of tons of brass and bronze from Koedespoort, the main Spoornet depot for all redundant material. It breaks my heart to think back at the sheer volume of good items you guys could use, injectors, hundreds of axle boxes, and passenger coach fittings for Africa. Recently, I sold two rusty shunters lamps for a fortune, but the best one was all the bronze name plates from the locos, there were hundreds of them! ! You probably know, but everything was labelled wash basins, luggage racks, toilets etc,etc. I still have a couple of brass plates reading (Don't open the door until the train stops) these are at the back of the toilet doors. All the other material is gone for ever unfortunately. I was listening to 702 and heard your e-mail address. Keep up the good work, and GOOD LUCK.

Jim”

“Dear Jim,

Thank you so much for contacting me and thank you for your kind words of support, we really do appreciate it and sometimes need the encouragement!

It is unfortunate that the railways let so much go to scrap and they still are, cutting up everything they can that to them is redundant material or equipment. To be fair, we have been quite fortunate though as we have pushed Transnet and other parties and most of the loco depots to hand over materials and tooling that we can use and have received quite a good amount of very valuable items ideal for steam locomotive preservation.

If you would like Jim, I can get our webmaster Lee Gates to add you onto his database for the weekly Reefsteamers depot report, just let me know. We will stay in touch!

Br,

Shaun Ackerman

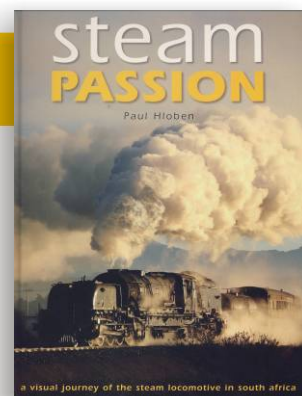
Reefsteamers Association”

Book Review on Paul Hloben's Steam Passion

New publications on South African steam are becoming rare these days as everyday steam is no longer with us. The difficulties of publishing such books are also quite daunting with their slightly limited appeal.

Paul Hloben, well known to SA rail enthusiasts, as a still and video photographer, and a strong supporter of Sandstone's activities, is a magazine publisher and has taken the plunge into book publishing with “Steam Passion”. Lee Gates reviewed the book.

Click here to read Lee's Review



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