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Your comments, queries
and suggestions are always
welcome!

Please email:
joannewest@btinternet.com

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

From the Ed

As July 31st approaches, which is currently the deadline for removal of the designated heritage assets from Millsite and Humewood Road, no documentation has been forthcoming from Transnet to HRASA for this to happen. Delays in Transnet's legal department over tax implications of the handover appear to have been resolved but still we wait. As SIA has no mandate to speak to Transnet on this issue we have had to rely on HRASA to keep up the pressure. This seems to have been ineffective and has caused much communication amongst HRASA members, SIA members and other interested parties. HRASA, in particular Chairman Mark Robinson, has been heavily criticised for not finding a solution to the serious problem but furthermore for keeping the Rail preservation community in the dark.

From an SIA perspective we work in partnership with HRASA but are becoming increasingly frustrated over what appears to be a fairly straightforward transaction. That Transnet, who instigated the whole process nearly three months ago, are delaying proceedings is beyond understanding. In fact the deadline to clear the site by 31.7.08 remains in place.

The SIA fundraising drive gained great momentum but has now slowed to a trickle as the urgency of the situation dissipates and Millsite moves from top of mind to some lower priority for most people. We know that SIA members have not abandoned the rescue project but it is difficult to maintain enthusiasm as Transnet dithers along.

Although there has been much justified criticism of HRASA, SIA members, Mike Myers and Errol Ashwell, have put forward a number of constructive proposals to upgrade HRASA. We have published both letters below along with a reply from Chairman Mark Robinson.

SIA will make no comment on this matter but the HRASA AGM is scheduled for the 2nd August and it will be for the HRASA Board of Directors to take appropriate action.

Although Millsite has consumed all SIA members for the last few issues other more positive events have been happening as new locos take to the tracks and steam continues to stay in action.

We have lots to tell you this month, enjoy the read!

An Open Letter to HRASA

Mike Myers writes:

It is very obvious that Mark Robinson is struggling under an immense burden of administration and responsibility and is coming under a lot of pressure.

While Mark sometimes objects to the fact that other people have contact with Transnet, he forgets that Transnet is a multi-divisional organisation dealing with Commercial Rail freight, properties, pipelines, and a whole host of other activities which go far beyond the very tiny world of steam preservation. For example some members hold leases to their premises which force us to have contact with them.

There are many people who interact with Transnet at the highest level for reasons which have nothing to do with HRASA and in so doing we are able to from time-to-time bring the Heritage subject up. Generally speaking there seems to be a good understanding of the need for a strong Rail Heritage programme in South Africa and the importance of ensuring that Transnet can talk to people at their level about issues that concern the national interest.

IT IS TIME TO CONSOLIDATE AND TO SUPPORT THE HERITAGE RAIL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (HRASA)

It behoves all of us who are conscientious about the future of Steam in particular to assist Mark. In our opinion the best way to assist Mark is to ask him to reconsider his position as Chairman, possibly accept the post of Deputy Chairman, and allow someone to come in who is a top line executive with resources at his disposal. What we mean by resources are intellectual, administrative, legal, financial etc. Such an individual has stepped forward in the form of Errol Ashwell.

It is also apparent that Mark does not operate on the basis of delegation. The Chair of HRASA should command the following resources:

1. A competent firm of accountants who can produce accounts regularly and on time. The AGM has been delayed because there are no accounts and a competent audit firm would produce those accounts in less than a week.
2. To establish and manage a proper web site. It is unthinkable that in the modern age an organisation like HRASA should be without a web site through which they can communicate with the world.
3. Access to strong marketing facilities. HRASA's membership should be measured in hundreds if not thousands by now. Steam in Action achieved a membership of over 600 in less than 6-months and it is still growing. This is exactly the same captive audience that HRASA should have addressed. We fully appreciate the cost involved and we sympathise that Mark probably has not had the fundraising and membership recruitment experience that is necessary. HRASA must approach the market in exactly the same way that the head of Fundraising at UCT Cape Town would approach their Alumni with the challenges of collecting funds. It is a skillful business and it is not to be taken lightly.
4. Secretarial resources. There must be secretaries, IT specialists, and people with real skills available at the drop of a hat to assist HRASA. This is not to say that HRASA needs those things that often but if the Chair of HRASA and the Directors if they wished to carry out their functions competently would inevitably have these resources at their fingertips. It is not unusual to receive a letter from the Chairman of the Board of Governors of a child's school which emanates from Anglo-American Head Office. Top people do not just work; they are involved in philanthropic, charitable and industry related bodies such as HRASA on an ongoing basis. In fact it is unusual if they are not involved in some way.

What we propose is the following. The HRASA membership and the HRASA directors should avoid a situation where there is some sort of AGM punch-up to try and dislodge the Chairman. Because Mark's personality does not lend itself to strong delegation and team work, other than within a very small and passive group, it means that he has to be part of something that is bigger than he is and that is to be part of an executive team. Most key meetings are attended by Mark alone which creates the impression of an autocracy.

Mark has credibility in certain areas and no one disputes that, but that credibility is dissipated because of his inability to deliver due to his inability to bring any resources to bear.

Why doesn't Mark consider the possibility of a voluntary reconstruction of HRASA which involves the appointment of effective directors, the creation of a web site, and the establishment of the key corporate components that anybody in that position must have at his disposal in order to succeed? Many of the people who have struggled to get HRASA's attention are Chartered Accountants; IT experts etc., and have strong marketing skills which HRASA would get for free.

We have to ask ourselves whether HRASA is truly representative of the global pro South African steam membership that is potentially out there. Steam in Action came into being in order to try to compensate for the conspicuous lack of skills that HRASA was displaying. HRASA has treated Steam in Action as an invading force which is counter productive because SIA has exactly the same objectives, i.e. let's stop the government from cutting up National Heritage items.

Remember there are many threatened sites so we have only just begun.

Never forget that when Sir Winston Churchill was dissatisfied with the performance of the 8th Army in North Africa he replaced the entire high command under Field Marshall Montgomery. He went on to win the war.

It really is time to throw away one's petty likes and dislikes. There are people like Errol Ashwell out there who can make a positive contribution. In the interim they are being marginalised. Let's combine Executive Authority with current credibility before it's too late.

This document is being circulated in the interests of all Rail enthusiasts by The Sandstone Heritage Trust who takes full and sole responsibility for its content.

If you have a view, then vote yes or no for the concept by emailing the undersigned. We will abide by the majority decision.

If it is positive we will approach HRASA.

Letter to the Entire SA Railway Heritage & Tourism Community

Letter from Errol Ashwell:

Hi All

So what's this letter about? There was mention a few weeks ago of the need for a 'Blueprint' for the future of Railway Heritage Preservation and Railway Tourism in South Africa. Subsequently, a Heritage Rail Association of South Africa (HRASA) speech made at the 2008 Eastern Cape Rail Conference was published to the SAR-L Group, with the suggestion that this speech was "as close to a blueprint as you can get".

In my opinion, that speech is unfortunately not a blueprint, but instead a well-presented vision - with which I am sure most of us agree whole-heartedly. I do not believe that anyone in this community disagrees with the vision of a future in which all significant railway heritage assets are preserved, clubs and commercial tour operators are able to run trains on Transnet tracks, and would-be branch line operators are able to lease those lines and run trains.

However, in addition to listing goals or objectives, a true blueprint needs to spell out a strategy and action plan: Who is going to do what, how it will be done, by when, and with what resources - in order to turn the vision into reality.

In the light of the lack of any other proposals, I feel compelled to put forward my suggestions for a blueprint to the community at large. These are calm, rational suggestions. Take them, leave them, use them, don't use them, it is up to you.

A warning though: These suggestions are not for the faint-hearted. If you agree with the bulk of these suggestions for a blueprint, you will be expected to actively participate in making this happen! If you support the 'change nothing, do nothing' status quo, then you need not read any further.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE OF RAILWAY HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND RAILWAY TOURISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. What is Wrong with the Status Quo?

It is weird that we even need to address this question, but there are a few people who seem to believe that the current situation is just peachy. So what is wrong with the status quo:

- With the notable exception of Rovos Rail, train tours around South Africa are no longer happening.
- Steam 'clubs' are never sure whether or not their trains will be allowed to run on Transnet tracks, and permissions are subject to withdrawal at the last minute.
- Would-be branch line operators are not able to lease such lines. And most such lines are now threatened with being lifted.
- Valuable heritage locomotives, rolling stock and other assets are being cut up or simply left to vandalism and decay.
- Dealing with Transnet with respect to heritage and railway tourism is currently an exercise in futility.
- Transnet conveniently refers all heritage and railway tourism issues to the Transnet Foundation and HRASA, while at the same time it simply ignores those very organisations - leaving them marginalised and impotent.
- The railway heritage and tourism community is fragmented and in real danger self-destructing. There is the HRASA faction, with the formal authority but no power. There is the Steam in Action (SIA) faction with a power-base and culture of action, but no formal authority. Then there is the 'armchair' faction who simply sit back and watch.

2. So What is Needed?

First and foremost, what is needed is unity. If, and only if, we can present a strong united front can we be effective in achieving any of our goals.

3. Why is HRASA Important?

HRASA has one very valuable asset: The formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Transnet that makes it, in Transnet's eyes, the official voice of the heritage preservation and railway tourism community in South Africa.

4. What is the Problem with HRASA?

HRASA is not the broad-based voice of the preservation and railway tourism community in South Africa, as envisaged by the MOU with Transnet. HRASA is representative of some (N.B. not all) of our community, but is pretty much a passive body, without the power-base, resources, credibility or stature to be able to deal eye-to-eye with government or Transnet, or influence their decision-making. It is also perceived as representing only a small, elitist group of South Africans - a sure fire recipe for being ignored by those in power.

5. Why is SIA Important?

Born out of the sheer frustration of seeing no tangible progress, SIA has one very valuable asset: It is a vibrant organisation with a rapidly growing membership, and a culture of getting things done. The Millsite issue is a good example of the effectiveness of SIA's 'mass action' ability.

6. What is the Problem with SIA?

It does not have any formal standing in the eyes of Transnet or government. It's mass-action tactics can get things done up to a point, but there is a danger of it being written off by those in power as representing a 'lunatic fringe' of our community.

7. And the Armchair Brigade?

The 'Armchair Brigade' needs to be mobilised to contribute meaningfully to the community.

8. So What Needs to be Changed, and Why?

We need to unify the entire community under one flag - and that needs to be the flag of HRASA. We need to create a 'new' HRASA: An HRASA that has a culture of action and getting things done, an HRASA with a broad-based membership power-base, the formal recognition of government and Transnet, the credibility and stature to gain their respect, and the ability to negotiate with them on an equal footing. Only once the 'new' HRASA can demonstrate that it is a unified body that is truly representative of all the people and organisations, of all races and age groups, from all over South Africa, that have an interest in preserving our heritage and seriously promoting tourism, will it be in a position to become a powerful force for change.

9. Why Would This Make Any Difference to the Status Quo?

A unified, national organisation with stature, that is seen to be representative of a broad constituency, can begin to negotiate with government and Transnet from a position of strength, not subservience. The new HRASA would not need to stand, cap in hand, asking for handouts, but would be able to deal eye-to-eye with those in power.

10. Too Good to be True? Too Naive?

Maybe - but it is the only thing that can work. As long as our community is fragmented, as long as HRASA is seen to be representative of only an elitist few, nothing meaningful will be achieved.

11. So Whom Would the 'New' HRASA Need to be Seen to Represent?

- Transnet.
- All other heritage / tourist railway operators and would-be operators.
- All railway / transport heritage preservation operations.
- All local government bodies interested in heritage preservation and/or developing railway tourism within their territories.
- All relevant provincial and central government departments.
- All heritage and railway enthusiasts - including all current members of SIA and the armchair brigade.
- And critically - Youth. Bringing in young people of both genders and from all cultural backgrounds is essential. The image that railway heritage is the domain of older white males, must be changed before anyone in authority will take this cause seriously.

12. So How Would this be Achieved?

The new HRASA would need to urgently embark on an extensive marketing, education and recruitment drive:

- A comprehensive Web presence needs to be created, promoting South African railway heritage preservation, railway tourism, HRASA members, and HRASA itself.
- Members need to be encouraged to involve schools and colleges in all activities - from preservation to operation. Young people need to become an integral and significant part of this community.
- HRASA membership needs to be expanded dramatically, as quickly as possible. Whereas there are probably not more than 1000 people who have even heard of HRASA, it is essential that the organisation be seen to represent a constituency of thousands of concerned South Africans - and sympathetic uitlanders.

13. An Inconvenient Truth

It is not Transnet's job to care about heritage preservation and tourism. This may sound like heresy to some, but it is unfortunately true. (Of course, we must recognise that there are some individuals within Transnet who care deeply.) Now that the government has finally woken up to the fact that this country needs a railway infrastructure, Transnet is having a tough enough time trying to fulfil its mission of reviving an effective infrastructure after many years of neglect. Senior Transnet officials are simply not tasked, nor paid, to worry about heritage preservation and railway tourism. That is HRASA's job! So if we are looking for a scapegoat to blame for the current state of affairs, let's blame ourselves: We have not built HRASA into the strong, effective, representative body that it needs to be.

14. So Why Would Transnet Take Notice of the 'New' HRASA?

Transnet would listen, take notice and respond, because:

- HRASA would be a significant, broad-based organisation that could not be simply ignored.
- HRASA would be capable of negotiating at the same level as Transnet sees itself.
- HRASA would have something significant to offer Transnet: HRASA would actually be capable of relieving Transnet of all railway heritage and railway tourism responsibilities - leaving Transnet management free to concentrate on its real mission and tasks at hand. HRASA would be seen to be helping Transnet.

15. Okay, So How Do We Build this 'New' HRASA?

It is all based on action and execution, not formality and bureaucracy:

- The majority of the community needs to decide that we need to do this, and that each person will play an active role.
- The current HRASA leadership needs to agree to make the changes necessary.
- Appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is willing and able to lead this transformation.
- Appoint an Executive Committee (Exco) consisting of Team Leaders who are willing and able to lead a series of specialist Task Teams, and be held accountable for producing results.
- Task Team Leaders will gather together their teams from the membership or outsourcing to competent outsiders.
- The Exco will be responsible for drawing up an overall Business Plan for the organisation.

- Task Teams required will include:
 - ❖ Marketing
 - ❖ Public Relations
 - ❖ Education
 - ❖ Membership Recruitment
 - ❖ Fund Raising
 - ❖ Finance and Administration
 - ❖ Safety and Legal
 - ❖ Operations ('Clubs')
 - ❖ Operations (Commercial Tourism)
 - ❖ Operations (Leased and Private Lines)
 - ❖ Operations (Heritage Preservation)
- The CEO will hold Exco meetings at least once every six weeks to follow up on progress to date.

16. So Is This Really Achievable?

Yes - if we do something about it. As van Goethe said: "Knowing is not enough. We must apply. Willing is not enough. We must do."

17. So Who is Errol Ashwell Anyway?

- I was fortunate to grow up in southern KwaZulu-Natal, living on farms at Jolivet and Umzimkulu, and then at Hlutankungu. My early school years were spent at Highflats. All of these places have one thing in common: They were all situated on the Umzinto to Donnybrook narrow-gauge railway system. This started a life-long love of trains (and perhaps just a little bias towards the narrow-gauge!).
- With a technical background in electronics and computing, I have spent most of my career in sales, marketing and business leadership positions in both the marketing communications and IT industries. For the past twelve years, I have been (and still am) the managing director of Autodesk Africa, a subsidiary of global computer aided design software giant Autodesk. I am responsible for Autodesk's sub-Saharan business.
- The closing and lifting of the Estcourt to Weenen, Umlaas Road to Mid-Illovo and Umzinto to Donnybrook narrow-gauge lines in KwaZulu-Natal, was the catalyst that spurred me on to get actively involved in trying to save the Port Shepstone to Harding line as the last remaining complete narrow-gauge line in KwaZulu-Natal. I got as far as being the 'preferred bidder' to operate the line, in a tender issued by the local district municipality in 2005. Then Spoornet pulled the plug on letting anybody take it over. It lies rotting away...
- I hope to be able to 'make a difference' in South Africa. The opportunity to be an active part of saving our railway heritage - and making it really work for the benefit of all South Africans - is irresistible.
- I have no firm ties to any particular railway organisation. I want to see the whole industry flourish. As you can see from this letter, I am not punting for any specific group or faction. I am simply promoting positive change to achieve our mutual vision.

18. So What Now?

If you are for maintaining the status quo - you need do nothing. If you are for progress and action - please lobby your favourite current HRASA member to press for making the changes necessary to make the vision a reality. Please do it NOW.

HRASA'S Response

HRASA LETTER TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN RAIL FRATERNITY

By now, we are sure, everyone is well aware of the two "open letters", with regard to HRASA, published in the past month or so, and this is our reaction to some of the points raised by the authors of these.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In the business world it is not normally acceptable to interfere in the workings of other companies. We are very certain that should HRASA, as a company, or any of our members representatives in their private capacities try to tell the authors of these "open letters" how they should run their businesses - particularly when done in public forum - we would, very rightly, be told in no uncertain terms to butt out! So, why would it be acceptable for anyone from outside to be telling us what we should be doing and even that we should ignore the normal processes of meetings and elections, as laid down in both HRASA's Articles of Association, our legal and moral obligations to our members, and South African Company Law?

And, any appointment without vote of a complete outsider, unknown to many within HRASA it would seem, as has been punted, would defeat a principal that we are sure all HRASA members and true supporters believe in, that of democracy! Yet, that is what was proposed in one letter.

That the heritage railway industry desperately needs every bit of help, every offer of hands-on assistance and every individual prepared to roll up their sleeves - either on a Saturday at Reefsteamers, Friends of the Rail or any of the other active preservation groups - or by getting involved in the bureaucratic shenanigans that plague our industry, is self-evident. However, trying to tell the guys on the ground, who are fulfilling those roles at present, that we are doing it all wrong and should chuck out those currently doing the work and replace them with people with no standing or experience in the industry is an insidious and unacceptable interference in the workings of HRASA.

This does not mean that we do not need, or indeed welcome, new blood, new concepts or informed constructive criticism. What it does mean is, come and work with us within the organisation. Get involved and get to understand what HRASA is set up to do and what it does and why. Become the representative of whichever rail club(s) or society (ies) you are a member of and come and work actively within HRASA.

LETTER FROM ERROL ASHWELL

This letter we believe amply indicates a couple of points, viz.:

- That Errol has a very real passion for steam and rail heritage in South Africa;
- That he has spent considerable some time cogitating on what, in his opinion, is wrong with the way things are run in the heritage railway industry in SA at present; and
- That he has little grasp of what HRASA does or what it is mandated to do in terms of its Articles of Association and various decisions by its Board of Directors over the years.

We initially set out to try to answer every point made in the letter, but then realised that, while there may be some valid points for either HRASA or SIA to take up, in the main, the long screed boils down to saying that HRASA needs to basically start from scratch - rewrite its Articles of Association and ignore the work done by many to date.

Errol's letter indicates a grand enthusiasm, but a lack of understanding of a large slice of the realities that we face every day - and have worked through quietly for the past 7 years. While to suggest that HRASA, SIA - or any combination of these organisations - and/or any others, will ever be in a position to deal "on an equal footing" with Government and Transnet is (I'm sorry to say) delusional. Sandstone couldn't do it, Rovos Rail couldn't do it, HRASA hasn't been able to do it - oh, and not even the Eastern Cape Provincial Government could, having to resort to tactics unavailable to our community to resolve the stonewalling from Transnet with regard to Kei Rail!

The real problem with what Errol, in his enthusiasm, is proposing for HRASA is that much of what he promulgates falls outside the mandates under which HRASA operates. The Association was set up originally to serve just one basic purpose - to get all the rail clubs talking to each other and to then represent those clubs when interfacing with Spoornet/Transnet. That's all!

HRASA is set up to be a bureaucratic tool for the combined heritage rail industry. It is not set up to interfere in the affairs of its individual members. It is not set up to promote the activities of its individual members, nor to promote the collective activities of those members. It is not set up to promote rail or heritage tour trains.

It is set up to deal with bureaucracy and officialdom. It is set up to interface with Transnet and Transnet Foundation, the Railway Safety Regulator, the SA Heritage Resource Agency and bodies of this ilk. It is set up to offer support and guidance to its member organisations when this is requested.

Should HRASA be looking at transforming itself to cover the areas listed above as not being in its remit? We don't think so - that is where 'Steam in Action' (SIA) comes in. That is what SIA is set up to do. And, it is because HRASA is not set up to work that side of the street, that we support the parallel activities of SIA and will work hand-in-glove with them in all areas of commonality and, where relevant, to use HRASA's official standing with various statutory bodies, government departments and companies to support SIA activities.

Should HRASA have made the move into the arena now the province of SIA? Probably so, and that we didn't could certainly be seen as a shortsightedness on our part. Nevertheless, we certainly have no interest in trying to duplicate what SIA has now got up and running. There is, in any case great commonality in membership when it comes to organisations as opposed to individuals.

Errol says HRASA has one thing going for it, its MoU with Transnet, before going on to disparage our role as representing the entire heritage industry. We see two problems with this statement:

- We believe that HRASA does represent the entire heritage rail industry as it stands today, at least in regard to the Association's mandate. We believe that every serious enthusiast is member of at least one of the rail clubs, societies, or preservation groups in SA. Moreover, every rail club, society, and preservation group of any stature is a member of HRASA. Ergo, through their respective elected HRASA representatives these organisations and their entire membership are represented. In fact, we find the references to HRASA only "representing the elitist few" odious, and would like to hear from Errol just who it is that he thinks we exclude - keeping in mind that HRASA is not a club or society, but a Section 21 Company (Not for Gain) made up of commercial, Section 21, and support companies and organisations within the heritage railway industry.
- Then, it should be noted that we have a little bit more going for us other than the MoU to which he has referred. We have a bright shiny new agreement with Transnet (see under "MEDIA/Breaking News" on the HRASA website). We have been recognised by - and continue to be involved with - the Railway Safety Regulator. We are involved in policy and legislative writing with the SA Heritage Resource Agency. We interface with Transnet Freight Rail through Chris Janisch and his Operators' Sub-committee. We are acting as an advisory body to the Western Cape Government, as well as acting in the same capacity body to the Eastern Cape Government on several different heritage rail projects in the province.
- Member organisations are, with HRASA support where requested, also involved in a number of projects and initiatives.

To turn to the question of resources - in bald financial terms and with the exception of Sandstone Heritage Trust - there is no money in the heritage rail industry in SA. Fact! Ask any one of the operators, such as Reefsteamers or Friends of the Rail, how much spare cash they have available to put into HRASA or SIA. The proposed methodology (point 15) is going to cost a huge amount of money - money that the majority of current HRASA members would rather see put towards real preservation on the ground, not paying for "Exco" meetings every six weeks as suggested.

Having said all that, we absolutely agree that the situation is not ideal. We have extremely limited resources in terms of manpower (and a very high percentage of that limited resource has other things to take care of, like jobs and family, ahead of their rail passion), money (see above) or time. Because the whole enthusiast body in SA numbers certainly no more than 500 persons, a high percentage of whom are not in a position to be more than armchair supports thanks to age, financial constraints and/or physical location. These factors also make the proposed methodology dubious - 11 different task teams covering various aspects of what is proposed for a new HRASA. Where do the people to tackle all these tasks come from? Are they available? Yes, but these can only be those same people who are stuck in already!

Bring in the professionals? We tried that and very soon discovered that, although the individual concerned had worked for Transnet until a couple of years before, we were spending far more time trying to bring him up to speed with the then current situation than was worth the effort and cost of doing so. It was simply quicker, easier and a whole lot cheaper for HRASA Directors to continue doing things themselves.

Three final points:

The speech given to the Eastern Cape Rail Conference by our Chairman was neither intended nor presented as a "blueprint". It was given as an overview of some of the realities of the heritage railway industry in SA today. (The speech is posted on the HRASA website - www.hrasa.co.za).

Some of what Errol Ashwell proposes has merit, but much of it is far more relevant to SIA than to HRASA.

Finally, we do not believe that public attacks on HRASA - or SIA or any other organisation or involved individual - serves any good purpose when it can be seen by the very people we need to see us as united and strong. Communicate with us directly, but we ask that mail indicating strong differences of opinion be kept away from public forum and scrutiny. That said this letter is posted on the HRASA website since the two letters addressed above have already been spread far and wide.

MA Robinson for HRASA 14.07.2008



Blast from the Past

MAFIKENG 1973

Submitted by John Batwell

Thirty-five years ago - Mafikeng shed : South African and Rhodesian steam sitting alongside each other was commonplace at this depot, in this instance a SAR 19D 4-8-2 and RR 15th Class 4-6-4 + 4-6-4.

Thanks to Geoff Cooke.



STEAM TOURISM 1980

Graham Warburton from the UK sent us these images of a 1980 rail tour to South Africa plus a copy of the itinerary.

"They were all taken on an SAR Steam Safari in October 1980. After the trip finished in Johannesburg, we took the 18h30 Trans Natal to Durban where a hire car was waiting when we went to Umzinto and Port Shepstone for a few more days before returning to Jan Smuts. The Escort picture with Billy Bester was taken on the trip back to the airport. It was a fantastic trip that we did a few more times but run by the LCGB or the RSSA. In all we visited the RSA 18 times some with Bryan Benn of video fame. The bargain fare was £280 or R504 the exchange rate being R1.80 to the £."

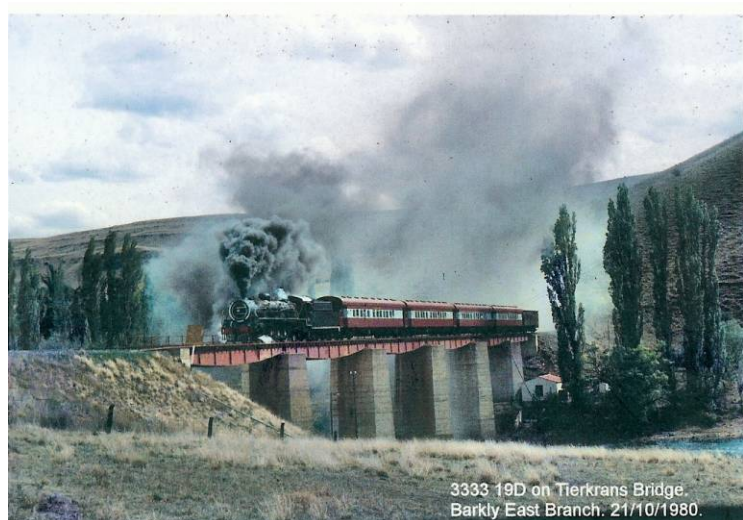
I don't think we will see theses fares again but SIA is committed to revive such tours.



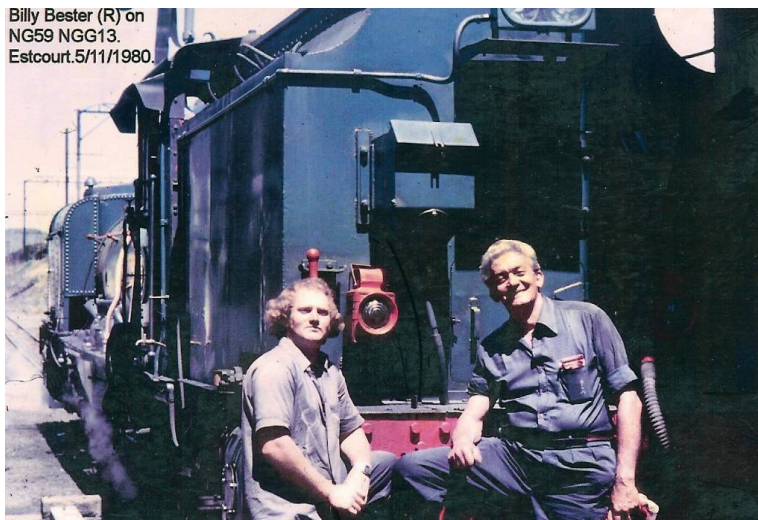
1995: 2006 14CRB



3333 19D En-route to Barkly East. Reversing Track / 21/10/1980.



3333 19D on Tierkrans Bridge, Barkly East Branch. 21/10/1980



Billy Bester (R) on NG59 NGG13. Escort. 5/11/1980.

SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAY TRAVEL BUREAU		
STEAM SAFARI		
COMMENCING DATE: 19 Oct 1980		
DAY	TIME	PARTICULARS
1 Sunday	1200/1600	Join the train at Milner Park Showgrounds. Tickets and other documents must be collected from Train Manager in Saloon 3-4
	1700	Transfer by motor-coach to the S.A. Railway Museum for a conducted tour
	1830	Dinner in the Blue Room and an address by a senior Railway official
	2000	Return to the train at Milner Park Showgrounds by motor-coach
2 Monday	0500	Depart MILNER PARK - DIESEL TRACTION
	0533	Arrive GERMISTON
	0548	Depart GERMISTON - class 15CA to Kroonstad 2850
	0609 1005	Arrive KROONSTAD
	0645 1035	Depart KROONSTAD - class 16E to Bloemfontein 858
	0648 1004	Arrive BLOEMFONTEIN
	0645 1030	Depart BLOEMFONTEIN - class 23 to Burgersdorp 3500
	0647 2145	Arrive BURGERSDORP
	0647 0005	Depart BURGERSDORP - double-headed class 19D to Alwal North 2699 + 3555
	0647 0152	Arrive ALWAL NORTH
3 Tuesday	0430	Depart ALWAL NORTH - double-headed class 19D to Lady Grey
	0635	Arrive LADY GREY
		Train split into 2 x 4 coach units
TRAIN 1 Tuesday	0745	Depart LADY GREY - class 19D 3555
	1202	Arrive BARKLY EAST
	1302	Depart BARKLY EAST
	1705	Arrive LADY GREY
TRAIN 2 Tuesday	0815	Depart LADY GREY - class 19D 2699
	1232	Arrive BARKLY EAST
	1332	Depart BARKLY EAST
	1735	Arrive LADY GREY
	1805	Depart LADY GREY - double-headed class 19D to Burgersdorp 3555 + 2699
	1956	Arrive ALWAL NORTH
	2025	Depart ALWAL NORTH
	2212	Arrive BURGERSDORP
	2255	Depart BURGERSDORP - double-headed class 15AR to Rameed 2092 + 2013

2.		
4 Wednesday	0433	Arrive ROMEAD
	0500	Depart ROMEAD - class GMA/M to Klipplaat 4079
	0500 7	Arrive KLIPPLAAT
	0507 1625	Depart KLIPPLAAT - class 19D to Oudshoorn 3524
5 Thursday	0800	Arrive OUDSHOORN. Train staged at Pepper Tree Road (Oudshoorn station)
		Depart by motor-coach on a visit to the Kango Caves for a conducted tour. Thereafter travel to the Highgate Gaitich Farm for lunch and a conducted tour. Return to the train at approximately 1500. Rest of afternoon at leisure. (Opportunity to visit Oudshoorn locomotive depot - own arrangements)
		Depart OUDSHOORN - class GMA/M to George 4073
	0900	Arrive GEORGE
	0922	Depart GEORGE - triple-headed class 24 to Wynana and return to George 3670 + 3622 + 3627
	0933	Arrive WYNANA
	1125	Arrive GEORGE
	1230	Depart GEORGE - class GMA/M to Mossel Bay 3640 + 24
	1336	Arrive MOSEL BAY. Train staged at Santos Beach
	1545	Depart MOSEL BAY - class GMA/M to Riversdale 4073 + 3640 + 24
6 Friday	0500	Arrive RIVERSDALE
	0511	Depart RIVERSDALE - double-headed class 14CB to Worcester 3006 + 1905
	0933	Arrive WORCESTER
	1003	Depart WORCESTER - double-headed class 19C and 14CB to Rameed 2499 + 3765
	1923	Arrive RAMEED. Train staged at Rameed
	2342	Depart RAMEED - class 19C and 14CB to Worcester 2499 + 3765
	0900	Arrive WORCESTER
	0912	Depart WORCESTER - class GMA/M to Mossel Bay 3640 + 24
	1112	Arrive MOSEL BAY
	1142	Depart MOSEL BAY - class 19C and 14CB to Worcester 2499 + 3765
7 Saturday	0406	Arrive DE AAR
	1000	Visit the locomotive depot at De Aar
	1444	Depart DE AAR - class 25C to Kimberley 3541
	1500	Arrive KIMBERLEY - train staged at Kimberley Station
		Depart by motor-coach for a visit to the Beaconsfield locomotive depot and the "Big Hole"
	0407 0430	Depart KIMBERLEY - class 16DA to Klerksdorp 879
	0430 1505	Arrive KLERKSDORP
	0430 1505	Depart KLERKSDORP - class 15E to Krugersdorp 2876
	1644	Arrive KRUGERSDORP
	1644 1715	Depart KRUGERSDORP - Electric traction to Johannesburg
12 Thursday	1747	Arrive JOHANNESBURG

All arrangements subject to change without notice.

All images courtesy of Graham Warburton

Preservation's Unsung Heroes

While we await Transnet to release the Millsite locos to HRASA, I think it is important to look back on the earlier days of preservation in South Africa. While SIA and HRASA may take credit for their actions over the Millsite affair we should look back to 1972 and the Preservation Committee formed in that year. Without their efforts the very locos we are now trying to save would not be in existence anyway. Although some locos had been set aside after withdrawal there was no specific plan in place for preservation.

In 1972, the then Minister of Transport, BJ Schoeman, instructed the SAR General Manager to start a National Collection of historically valuable locomotives and other rolling stock. This was then passed down to the Manager of the Publicity and Travel Department who controlled the SA Railway Museum then housed under the Rissik Street Bridge in Johannesburg.

A preservation committee was formed comprising the following people:
Jan Coffee, Curator of the SA Railway Museum, later replaced by Pieter Crafford.
Les Pivnic, Assistant /Acting Curator, SA Railway Museum.
Charles McLean, staff member, SA Railway Museum.
George Barclay, GM's Motive Power Office.
Mr. Mann, GM's Rolling Stock office.

Additionally Messrs Fowler and Best of the CME's office were also involved.

Alec Watson, then Loco Foreman at De Aar, also became involved when permission was given to store locos in his depot and coaches in Bridge Yard at De Aar.

Les Pivnic, the sole survivor of the original committee, describes how the process worked.

"When a particular loco or coach was to be withdrawn from service and scrapped, an internal letter was sent to the Museum from either George Barclay (locos), Mr Mann (coaches) asking whether the unit was required for "museum purposes". John Best would follow the same procedure with goods wagons. Initially Charles McLean and I would look at the item on offer and decide whether to accept into the National Collection. Our decision was usually accepted by Mr. Coffee or later by Mr. Crafford as the head of the Committee.

Unfortunately Charles McLean suffered from poor health and had to resign and it was then left to me to make decisions to release or keep any items on offer from the GM's office. This I continued to do for several years into the 1970's.

Another duty was releasing several locos and coaches to the newly formed RSSA Preservation Group, now SANRASM. The core of their collection was achieved in this way. Notable items were the Wardale 19D 2644 and 6A 454.

In the meantime the locos at DeAar were cosmetically repaired and restored under the guidance of Alec Watson at De Aar. Unfortunately he could not keep such a close eye on the coaches in the Bridge Yard and many were vandalised.

As well as forming the National Collection, Jan Coffee was also instrumental in applying the policy of mounting locomotives at stations and also getting Ministerial approval to donate locos to municipal or private bodies for preservation. This resulted in many locomotives being preserved outside the National Collection. The policy had its pitfalls though, as many locomotives deteriorated badly. However, the up side was that a few rare locomotives survived to be restored to working order in years to come. Notable examples were the 16E 857 at Bloemfontein and the GB 2166 at Aliwal North. Had they not been preserved as station monuments in the first place they would not have been available for restoration.

All of this official preservation activity occurred long before the formation of the Transnet Heritage Foundation who inherited an existing National Collection as well as a large number of station monuments largely due to the efforts of the original preservation committee. I do hope that the efforts of the committee are remembered when the history of rail preservation in South Africa is documented. Sadly and unbelievable as it may sound efforts were made by some THF personnel to sweep the original committee's work "under the carpet" by claiming preservation only began with THF. This is a blatant lie.

Official SAR railway preservation started in 1972 under the instruction of Minister BJ Schoeman, long before THF was thought of".

So all of you out there that thought it just happened the other day, think again and give thanks to Les and the original committee that started it all and to Alec Watson who left us something to preserve.

Dave Richardson.



It is due to the efforts of the original Preservation Committee that locos like this survive today (all photographs courtesy of Dick Manton)

Operator and Club News

STEAM RETURNS TO THE WESTERN CAPE

After a long period of drought, steam traction returned to the Western Cape on June 28th when Ian Pretorius' Atlantic Rail operation ran its first train from Cape Town along the harbour line next to the Atlantic Ocean for a sunset cruise with Class 24 3655. Driver Phillip Reimers was partnered by his wife Dalene as fireman (fireperson?).

SIA congratulates Ian and his team for putting steam back in action in Cape Town and we wish him every success for the future.



Above images courtesy of Len du Preez
Below images courtesy of Joe Neethling



3BR 1486 BACK IN SERVICE

Following her overhaul at Umgeni Steam Railway, Class 3BR No: 1486, "Maureen" hauled her second revenue earning train on June 29th.

Ben Myburgh sent us this picture.

Well done USR! Another loco back in action!

Photograph courtesy of
Ben Myburgh



FRIENDS OF THE RAIL NEWSLETTER

Read all about the Rovos Fire, and other articles ...

[Click here to view download PDF File](#)

UMGENI STEAM RAILWAY MOVES ANOTHER LOCO TO SAFETY

Graham Gillett sent us this report and picture as USR continues to clear its old Pinetown site.

Class 14R N0. 1576 standing at Inchanga Station after having being hauled "dead" by diesels from Kloof, 20 July 2008. The loco has stood at Pinetown yard for the last 16 years and is showing the signs of vandalism and the ravages of standing in open storage for so long. 12R 1505 has also been moved down from the Spoornet nursery and has joined 1576. As soon as space is available, both locos will be staged in the secure, fenced yard under 24 hour guard.

Even standing at Kloof, 1576 was subjected to attacks by scrap thieves! Only the steam crane, No. 48 and two balcony coaches stand at Pinetown now.

The white articulated guards van ex 1947 Pilot train for the Royal visit of that year has also made it to Inchanga!



Upcoming Events

THE AARDKLOP FESTIVAL EXPRESS

Reefsteamers is running a train to the Aardklop Festival this year ...

[Click here to view download PDF File](#)

PHOTOGRAPHIC DAY JANUARY 2009

Sandstone Estates extends a special invitation to Steam in Action members.

Traditionally January is wheat harvest time at Sandstone Estates. The area planted this year is particularly large and the Narrow Gauge railway will be deployed as part of a logistical support programme to haul wheat from the lands to the silos. Of course it is very difficult to predict what land will be combined on what day this year but we will be hosting a special one-day event entitled "Steam Power in Action". We will deploy our big locomotives, typically two Garratts, possibly banked by an NG15 depending on the size of the consists. The gross weight of the largest train will probably be in the region of 6-800 tons. Regardless of whether we are able to get the timing right we will run this super power configuration for the enjoyment of visitors. We will try to alter the consists to suit the photographers, and we will also almost certainly use some of the smaller locomotives, such as the two Lawleys.

The date has yet to be finalised but it should be during the second week of January 2009. We will advise visitors as soon as possible as to the dates.

This is not a public event due to the fact that the farm is heavily pre-occupied with the harvest. However Wilfred Mole will personally be there to assist and to host visitors.

The programme will be as follows:

*Meet for breakfast from 07h00 onwards
Trains all day
Evening passenger train for SIA members*

The following morning (Sunday) a photographic special

As always there will be a charge to cover our catering expenses. It is important that we receive payment in advance because we do not have the time or the resources to collect money from individuals on the day.

Please bear in mind that this is in the middle of our rainy season and so there is a real possibility that it could get rained out. However, we will ensure that we keep everybody informed by SMS right up until the last minute.



**Photograph courtesy of
Dave Richardson**

ZIMBABWE LAWLEYS

John Batwell writes, "Whilst it is fantastic to see two of the Falcon 4-4-0s now "steamable" at Sandstone, remember the two locomotives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, that have not been quite so lucky to steam again, but nevertheless have survived to this day as static exhibits in the neighbouring country - at the NRZ Museum and Centenary Park respectively".



Photographs courtesy of John Batwell

SANDSTONE ESTATES' LAWLEY LAUNCH

Read about this event, as experienced by Lee Gates from Reefsteamers ...

[Click here to view download PDF File](#)

ANGOLA UPDATE

Since we first published information on Angolan steam we have had a number of updates. Thomas Kautzor has sent us more information.

"Hello,

This is in response to the May and June SIA Newsletters.

ANGOLA LOCO LIST

Further to John Middleton's additions to the Angola Loco List, there a number of surviving or potentially surviving steam locomotives which he did not mention:

CFL - in a photo taken from a plane taking off from Luanda airport in October 2007, a tender steam locomotive can be seen derelict outside Luanda-Musseques workshops.

CFL - 60 cm gauge 0-8-0T No. 31 (O&K 9935/1927) was said to have been taken to Luanda for preservation after the closure of the Canhoca - Golungo Alto narrow gauge branch. The loco is also reported preserved in the O&K builder's list.

CFB - 11 class 4-8-2 No. 402 (NBL 26960/1949) is reported to have been preserved serviceable at Lobito shed.

Industrial steam - two 0-4-0WTs from the Sociedad Agricola Casseguel Lda. (SAC) sugar mill, Nos. 1 and 2 (Krauss 8047/1922 and 8358/1925), are said to be preserved by the roadside at Catumbela, between Lobito and Benguela.

CFA (60 cm gauge) - plinched near the jetty at Porto Amboim is a 0-6-0T (LHW 2305/1921), which is thought to have come from Benguela. Also still present, dumped near the loco shed, are two tender locos, including one of two 2-8-0Ts Nos. 60-61 built by Henschel (28457-8/1949), together with some unidentified 0-8-0 diesels. The railway was officially closed in October of 1975, but some traffic a short distance out of Porto Amboim is said to have continued until 1991 using two of the diesels. Recent photos of the three steam locos from July 2007 have been published in the last edition of Fern-Express (No. 98, 11/2008).

CFM - narrow gauge Decauville 0-4-0T No. 505 has been reported preserved at Lubango."

RESITA LOCO

Shaun McMahon who works on the Rio Turbio Railway in Argentina has been very involved with the technology of the late LD Porta. He sent us this info on some amazing economy achieved with steam traction on the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway in Wales.

The article is courtesy of Locomotives International magazine, Paul Catchpole.



New Steam Technology Gives a 33% Coal Saving

Chimney by Nigel Day,
Photos by Martyn Bane

Above: The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway now has a standard Resita 0-8-0T in service - at least it was standard until Nigel Day fitted a Lempor exhaust. 764.425 is seen at Golfa on 5th May 2008 sporting the new, taller chimney.

Right: Earlier the same day the Romanian-built loco was tested in the yard at Llanfair Caerinion. Nigel Day is on the footplate while Shaun McMahon (on a short visit away from his work at Rio Turbio in Argentina) looks on and Martyn Bane records the scene.



It is Sunday 4th May and much of the day has been spent setting the valve gear, with accuracy difficult to achieve due to anomalies in the 'rough and ready' construction of the loco. Coal consumption for a return trip to Welshpool had been reduced from 30 buckets to 20 and further savings are expected as re-engineering progresses. The W&LLR has Lempor exhausts fitted to all locos returned to steam as a matter of course. The Lempor team would now welcome an opportunity to show what they can do with a standard gauge loco, e.g. an Austerity 0-6-0ST.

Wheel Arrangements

For those of you not so familiar with steam terminology, particularly with locos, here is a short description of the main types. So next time you will know what a 4-8-2 is!

DATA FILE 1

Wheel arrangements

Steam locomotives

The wheel arrangement notation devised by the US engineer, Frederic Whyte, has been adopted in Britain and the United States for steam engines. The Whyte system counts the wheels. Three numbers are separated by dashes - the first number gives the leading carrying wheels, the second is the driving wheels and the third, the rear carrying wheels. T after the wheel arrangement denotes a tank engine. The two parts of articulated locomotives such as Garratts, are described separately and joined by a +.

The continental system counts the number of axles. The French use a number for the driving axle, the Germans use a letter, (see chart below).

On steam locomotives, all power is transmitted through the driving wheels which are connected by coupling rods. The leading carrying wheels may be in the form of a two axle bogie or a simple one, either in a pivoted pony truck or in curved guides.

A heavy locomotive needs to be guided through curves and complicated trackwork when it is running at speed to protect the engine from derailment and the track from damage. Trailing carrying axles also have a guiding function but are usually provided to support the weight of a large firebox or in the case of tank engines, the coal bunker.

COMMON WHEEL ARRANGEMENTS FROM 1923

0-4-2 021 1B1		4-6-2 231 2C1		Pacific
0-4-4 022 1B2		4-6-4 232 2C2		Hudson, Baltic
2-4-0 120 1B		0-8-0 040 D		
2-4-2 121 1B1		2-8-0 140 1D		Consolidation
4-4-0 220 2B		2-8-2 141 1D1		Mikado
4-4-2 221 2B1		2-8-4 142 1D2		Berkshire
4-4-4 222 2B2		4-8-0 240 2D		
0-6-0 030 C		4-8-2 241 2D1		Mountain
2-6-0 130 1C		4-8-4 242 2D2		Northern
2-6-2 131 1C1		2-10-0 250 2E		
2-6-4 132 1C2		4-6-6-4 2332 2CC2		Challenger
4-6-0 230 2C		4-6-2 + 2-6-4 231+132 2C1+1C2		Ten-wheeler

NOTES: 0-4-2 notation used in Britain and North America
021 notation used in France
1B1 notation used in Germany

Letters from our Members

The master restorer of many locomotives both large and small has issued a challenge to all rail enthusiasts.

BLOEMFONTEIN LOCO UPDATE

Looking at the photos received from the Lawley launch we can feel proud of what Sandstone has achieved in a short time. Life however does not stop with a mere Lawley milestone so we start to explore a new engineering field for us, the South African broad gauge. Not a safe or friendly place however with a hostile administration and perhaps even more hostility from sectors of the preservation community. The last restored locomotive was rebuilt in Bloemfontein many years ago namely the famous Red Devil number 3450. How is she doing today?

Sandstone has started rebuilding class 19D number 2654 as from today the 1st of July 2008. Attached is a photo of the locomotive without boiler cladding and without some boiler tubes. We had to start with the repairs our boiler inspector booked to be done before a certificate can be obtained. A hell of a lot of work to be done which includes some boiler tube renewal, all boiler studs renewal and around two hundred stay caps and dozens of moveable stays to be renewed of which we do not have any. As this locomotive is a privately owned locomotive we cannot expect any gifts but have to pay cash for everything. May turn out to be very expensive looking at the quotations received.

Hope our Web visitors enjoy the photos as we intend to keep you updated with our progress. I believe that some of the members of SIA are also hard at work to rebuild some locomotives so we would like to challenge anybody in South Africa whether they be members of SIA or HRASA to send their weekly progress to our SIA newsletter. Please note a weekly running shed report is not a rebuild report. So come aboard Reefsteamers. PCNR. Friends of the rail THF and our numerous other friends in Natal or Western Cape.

I would like to invite all the experts to feel free to talk to me in Bloemfontein as I can only learn from people like the members of HRASA and the clubs all over South Africa who supply me with their wisdom and insight the last few months.

I really miss my friends the big steam locomotives, but when this message is sent I intend to take the Harley for a long drive to end a perfect day. It is good to be a full time fitter surrounded by so many challenges and by so many Heritage opportunities.

Lukas. A Nel
lucasn@telkomsa.net



Photograph courtesy of Lukas Nel

Donations Update

Since our last newsletter we have received donations from the following members:

Les Pivnic, Bruce Anderson, Steve Harris, Paul de Munnik, Jim Nolan, Graham Warburton, Thomas Schmied, Frank & Sheila Cronin, James Strachan, Nelson Freeman, A.B. Gawthrop, R.R. Darsley, Mr & Mrs Les Smith, Andy Selfe, Vaughan Mostert, Tony Jervis, TOM STANTONS DVD AUCTION, Martin Grigg, Ian Drummond, Gary Barnes, Peter Bagshawe, Fraser & Sandy Howell, Paul Yates, Rodney H. Glaysher and Torsten Freyer.

On behalf of SIA, our sincerest thanks. Although the Millsite rescue is in stall mode, we know that we will be able to do the job thanks to all your generosity. The lack of action on Transnet's behalf has also stalled our fund raising, the Millsite rescue WILL happen so keep the donations coming!

Visit our Founding Members

