steam in action

south africa

EDITION 16 KEEPING TRACKS MARCH 2009

Welcome

to the March newsletter.

This was by far the toughest newsletter to put together purely because of the huge volume of positive information coming in from our members around the world.

It has been a truly remarkable month and many successes have been logged. We put this down to the fact that with nearly 800 members worldwide Steam in Action is beginning to make its presence felt. We have members who have taken the time and trouble to engage with officials in various Tourism and Heritage organizations, we formed an Advisory Board which has embraced the challenges thrown at them with great enthusiasm. We have made numerous field trips which have born fruit in each and every instance, and finally we have engaged with the Heritage authorities on an informal, social and behind the scenes basis to find out what is really going on. Unless we are being misled, it looks as though they are having a change of heart. The draconian Steam Exit plan that was designed to coordinate the end of steam in South Africa is now an outdated and it would appear unfashionable policy.

Transnet as an organization has been in a state of semi rigor mortis for years as far as preservation is concerned. We have gone from the very highest of highs to the lowest of the lows. One minute they were going to concession branch lines and the next minute they were going to sell them to the scrap industry. At the moment we are somewhere in-between these scenarios, but due to lack of strong, powerful, clear thinking management at the top, the policies, whatever they are, are not actually being communicated to the people on the ground. Therefore a relatively minor official who is responsible for state owned, Transnet managed assets might well think that it is well within his area of responsibility to sell it for scrap.

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On the other hand officials who are working fairly closely with the Heritage sector are sticking their necks out and making life much easier by taking a more pro-Heritage stance. We thank the latter and we ask the former to ask if they really want to be part of the demise of something that was very grand and which can still survive at least to the extent that people in the future will be able to develop some appreciation for the superb steam hauled railway network that criss-crossed South Africa in every direction.

The format of this month's newsletter is completely different because it is driven by circumstances and we feel no apology is necessary because after all we are an action orientated organisation, not a club who meet for noggin 'n natter nights and publish newsletters as if that was an end in itself.

Steam in Action Advisory Board

Frankly having a full-time paid director of Steam in Action is not a workable strategy. What we need are passionate people who give of their time and often their money in order to be part of something that they feel strongly about and which has powerful moral credentials in their own minds. Reefsteamers and the Sandstone Heritage Trust, two of the Heritage organisations that put SIA together in the first place, met and came up with the names of a number of people who would help guide us and who would be prepared to contribute almost on a daily basis. We sent out a number of invitations, of which some 90% were accepted with alacrity. Therefore the current SIA Advisory Board comprises the following:

Andy Selfe, Western Cape
Chris Janisch, Friends of the Rail, Pretoria
Dick Manton, UK
Elize Lubbe, Reefsteamers
Errol Ashwell, Natal
Ian Pretorius, Cape Town
Lee Gates, Reefsteamers
Les Smith, Reefsteamers
Mike Myers, Sandstone Heritage Trust
Pat Ackerman, Reefsteamers
Phil Mortimer Snr., UK
Phil Mortimer Jnr., USA
Robin Taylor, Natal
Shaun Ackerman, Reefsteamers
Wilfred Mole, Sandstone Heritage Trust

This list does not represent the demographics of South Africa but we are pleased to note that there is an ever increasing number of Africans joining SIA. We have written to them as a group asking them to step forward and assist us in achieving our objectives, particularly when it comes to liaising with the SA Government.

The question has been asked, What are the criteria used by SIA in appointing Advisory Board members? We have held detailed discussions on this and we believe that the current Advisory Board represents the founding fathers who are obviously driving the strategy and giving of their time to produce the newsletter etc. Furthermore people who were consistently active in commenting on important issues came to the fore, and finally the general criterion is that an Advisory Board member is appointed on the basis of consistent demonstrated personal interests and responsiveness to challenges and communications. Advisory Board membership is not doled out on the basis that we need to have an even spread of people throughout the sector. One should remember that there are numerous clubs and organisations to whom many people belong but SIA does not wish to go down that road. It is a lobby group and therefore it needs to have a voice and hence needs vocal, interested and responsive people. Above all it needs to have people with courage because those people are not always going to be that popular or say things that people want to hear.

We will continuously upgrade and refresh the Advisory Board and those organisations who are active in Steam Preservation in South Africa who are not represented must step forward and start commenting on the issues that directly affect them.

This is an informal process but we believe a flexible and effective one.

Many of the Advisory Board members have submitted their thoughts on the way forward. Their comments appear below.

Shaun Ackerman

"My passion for steam came from my late grandfather and dad. It is my passion that drives me to assist in the survival of steam in South Africa but as a hands on person."

Shaun Ackerman is a very prominent player in this field and a great SIA supporter. Though he is only 30 years of age he is one of the most knowledgeable people in South Africa, particularly on the technical side. He is also a qualified Main Line driver.

Ian Pretorius

"I grew up loving steam trains and that interest many years later saw me become a founder member of the Railway Society of South Africa Preservation Group in 1982.

The Preservation Group later broke away from the Railway Society and became the South African National Railway and Steam Museum (SANRASM).

SANRASM started with three locomotives donated by the South African Railways and the first task of the committee was to raise funds. The logical way to do this was to run trains. The coaching stock was hired and gradually they were able to purchase stock and locomotives from literally hundreds of day trains to Magaliesburg.

During my second term as Chairman, in 1988, I was made an offer by the then South African Transport Services Museum, later the Transnet Museum and finally the Transnet Heritage Foundation. A condition of employment was that I had to relinquish my position of chairman and also the committee and continue as a member only.

My first task at the SATS Museum was to raise funds for the preservation of vintage coaches and locomotives. There were occasions that a body such as the Museum needed to mark such as the ZASM Centenary. These were not necessarily fund raisers but educational and school groups were brought in by steam train every day and the children were then shown around the museum. This was a full week of celebration with many trains.

Initially there were only day trips to raise funds but in 1989 the first long distance railtours started. These included the farewell to steam on the Kimberley – De Aar line and renowned English wildlife artist David Shepherd took part and took delivery of a donated steam locomotive. The first ventures out of South Africa into Zimbabwe and the Victoria Falls took place in 1992. By this time the Union Limited was established and consisted of a full rake of vintage stock. In 1993 it was clear that tourism was on a very firm footing in the Western Cape and in 1994 the Union Limited moved to Cape Town. Tourists were expecting a lot more than the early steam enthusiast railtours offered and the first suite coaches were constructed for the Union Limited. A coach restoration depot was opened at Salt River and a locomotive depot at Dal Josafat in Paarl.

The proximity of the Garden Route to Cape Town allowed the establishment of the Golden Thread railtour. The Golden Thread became the biggest earner for preservation and was so popular that a second vintage set was established so that two trains could run at the same time.

There were many more tours to Victoria Falls from Cape Town and the very first steam railtour to Namibia. It was the first time in 34 years that steam had run in Namibia and was a most successful tour.

In 2001 Transnet underwent many management changes and I opted for an early retirement package. I then joined the Spier Vintage Train and have been instrumental in putting Rail Safety Management Systems in place as required by the new Railway Safety Regulator. I have also been instrumental in changing the license agreement with Transnet so that the Spier Vintage Train became an Operator and could run trains with its own motive power and coaching stock.

The Spier organisation was not vintage train orientated and they decided to sell the train to Rovos Rail.

I negotiated an agreement to put steam motive power back on track in the Western Cape and have a three year business plan to turn the business around.

Operationally, I have long established contacts with all the Southern Africa Railway networks."

Mike Myers

"I would be delighted to serve on the "board". You raise an important issue and that is that we have so very few black members. One of the things we should be doing is to raise awareness amongst the black population so that we are more representative of the broader population. I don't know if the newsletter is the vehicle to use but we should ask the SIA members to each nominate a potential member from other ethnic groups who we could then write to.

Basically what we would say is that their name has been forwarded by a member whose has nominated them to become a registered member of SIA and that they have been registered. The person must be given the opportunity to opt out by simply by sending us an e-mail. The person nominated would of course have to be someone that the member knows intimately and have an interest in steam preservation and rail tourism.

We would also send them the SIA mandate and other information and urge them to become involved.

I expect that this suggestion will be debated by the members and it would be interesting to hear their views."

Donations to Steam in Action

We received a wonderful response to the Millsite request and that is still a hot topic which is likely to have a successful outcome rather sooner than later.
The UK Rail Preservation industry in particular is extremely well organised and amazing things are achieved as a result of the receipt of lots of small donations.
Steam in Action has a trust fund which still receives a trickle of donations. Every cent of this money will be used for specific projects. At the moment everything is earmarked for the Millsite move but as you will see as this newsletter unfolds that project will be multiplied 20 times as we lock on to endangered assets. So however small the donation please do not forget to help us build a war chest so that when we have to deal with the authorities we can do so with not only moral authority but with money in the bank.

Our bank details are as follows:

South African Account:
Account Name: Steam in Action
Bank: First National Bank South Africa
Account Number: 62173787543
Branch Code: 261550
Swift Code: FIRNZAJJ

UK Account:
Bank: HSBC Bank plc, 6 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1DJ, UK
Beneficiary: Worldview Investments Limited
Sandstone Steam Railroad
Sort Code: 40 34 12
Account Number: 71608150

Should you make an electronic transfer please notify Babita Hira either by email (babitan@sandstone.co.za) or by fax (+27 (0) 866 148 476) so that we can confirm receipt.

For further information, visit: http://www.steam-in-action.com/donations.html.

The Future of Plinthed Locos in South Africa



An area where SIA members can be of huge assistance is to talk to Municipalities and organisations that have locomotives which have effectively been abandoned within their own community. During a recent trip down to the Avontuur Line to save Narrow Gauge wagons that had been sold to Reclam for scrapping we checked on the status of a number of the locos plinthed along the line.

Patensie, which used to be on a branch line of the Port Elizabeth – Avontuur Narrow Gauge line (the longest Narrow Gauge railway in the world) has now been abandoned so the locomotive standing there is effectively stranded. We spoke to Brian Murison of the Heritage Foundation who said that the locomotive was now the responsibility of the local community. We tracked down the name of the correct individual and send them a letter urging them to arrest the rapid deterioration of the item.

If SIA members know of other plinthed locomotives in the area could they please investigate the matter. What we would like are photographs of the unit but more importantly the outcome of a discussion with an official who might normally be in charge of it.

We are including our letter because SIA members probably need some motivational facts to use in their discussions. The reason that Sandstone volunteered to move this locomotive is the fact that it is 2-ft Narrow Gauge and they are involved in the heavy movement of wagons from the area so it is not impractical to include the locomotive as well. Click here to view PDF.

Rail VIP Visit to South Africa



Resulting from the visit by David Morgan, Chairman of the Heritage Railway Association of Britain and Ireland and President of the European Federation of Museum & Tourist Railways, Sir William McAlpine, Leo de Rothschild, Benedict Cadbury, James Hervey-Bathurst, Mike Schumann and a number of prominent and well respected European based steam and rail enthusiasts there has been an additional focus on the need for funding. See UK publicity and the link to an Old Glory article: http://www.sandstone-estates.com/interim/Maluti_Magic/Old_Glory/Old_Glory_high_res_April_09.pdf.

David Morgan gave an excellent presentation to a packed house of steam enthusiasts on the Sunday of the Maluti Magic event in the Free State. His wise counsel provided much food for thought and will we believe be the inspiration for some new initiatives. The full transcript of David's talk is attached. Click here to view PDF.

Maluti Magic

A small but significant event took place in March, namely the Maluti Magic event at the Sandstone Heritage Trust site at Sandstone Estates in the Eastern Free State.

Interest was expressed earlier this year by a number of influential people in the UK that they would like to see what South African Rail Preservation and in particular Sandstone's 2-ft Narrow Gauge railway was all about. Most of them visited Reefsteamers, Sandstone, and the Alan Paton Railway in Natal. While they to a large extent kept their thoughts to themselves regarding the dysfunctionality of the structures that are supposed to look after this country's Rail Preservation, they obviously had a good time and made it very clear to us that there are jewels amongst the gravel and if we can sift them out and get things organised, we can still hold our heads up high here in South Africa and say that we are a rail destination of note. A photographic gallery of the Maluti Magic event is available to view at http://www.sandstone-estates.com/interim/Maluti_Magic/index.html. However we list below some very succinct comments made by these ladies and gentlemen. Obviously much of it related to their Sandstone experience because that was the dominant part of their visit.

"Thank you again for one of the most fantastic rail experiences of my life. It was a huge privilege to be invited and to meet you, hear some of the story of your collection of locomotives, tractors, ox-wagons, traction engines..... Benedict Cadbury"

"I will remember the weekend forever..... the best was riding in the Armoured Car. Angela Schumann"

"We both really enjoyed our visit to your Sandstone Estate and cannot thank you enough for all the effort you and Lyndie and all your helpers put in to make everything work and make us so welcome. The photos I took will be a constant reminder of a memorable weekend. Mike Schumann"

"The whole atmosphere and friendliness of the event was terrific and the overseas visitors were clearly much impressed. There was very useful input from David Morgan on dealing with Government which will have given food for thought for the local volunteer groups and clubs present. Dick Manton"

"A really special weekend you organised for us and how privileged we were to be included. It really was a unique occasion with the range of locomotives only matched by the breadth of railway and steam expertise amongst your staff, the volunteers and the guests. Ralph Montagu"

"I would like to convey my sincere thanks for the fantastic weekend just passed. Maluti magic it was indeed. It was also a wonderful opportunity to meet like-minded people, and I hope it will be of benefit in our future endeavours to save rail tourism in this country. Chris Janisch"

"It was altogether a fantastic and wonderful time and we are so grateful to you for showing us your quite incredible collection and I do admire the style in which you do everything. Sir William McAlpine"

"Words fail us, however, we are both agreed that it will be a long time before we come down to earth again, thanks to your unstinting generosity, kindness, and unbelievable achievement. A celebration of genius, imagination, courage, determination, sacrifice and hard work to preserve the greatness of mankind and the environment on the part of you both, which we were so privileged to share for those magic moments. Robin and Sue Taylor"

HRASA/Millsite Update

For new members who have joined and who were not involved in the surge of activity that we experienced when the authorities starting cutting up part of the National collection of 3'6" steam locomotives, we have attached Steve Appleton's succinct report dated 19 May 2008. Click here to view PDF.
The position is as follows:

1. The items remain safe for the time being.
2. There are indications that the authorities have at last concluded that HRASA is indeed an edentulous organisation.

There is now much activity behind the scenes in order to construct a scenario where everybody knows who the competent authority is to take care of Millsite, who its executive directors will be, what authority they have, and whether – and this is an important point – they will be able to deal with the practical, logistical and legal issues that prevented SIA from doing anything in the beginning. Even if HRASA had been cooperative the documentation you received was unsustainable and did not provide authority for a private sector organisation to suddenly take possession of large tonnages of state assets. SIA and a number of the individual participating organisations, such as Reefsteamers, have documented their position ad nauseam but it would appear that shortly after the Millsite issue developed HRASA fell into a state of paralysis.

We have been advised that a new HRASA or a replacement HRASA will rise from the ashes and if it does it will be in a position to act immediately and will in fact then deal with the practicalities of the Millsite move. Once that happens we will again look at the funding and we will again look at the logistics. Suffice to say that the SIA Advisory Board has a clear picture of what they think should happen and these thoughts have been communicated. The discussions are obviously sensitive and we will therefore ask our members to be patient in terms of what information we are able to release.

Private Sector wins Important Scrap Tenders

The Sandstone Heritage Trust has been successful with two tenders. By submitting tenders for scrap we are actually able to purchase valuable railway heritage items, which of course are then put straight into preservation. In Port Elizabeth the organisation put in a tender for narrow gauge wagons and in Daanskraal it tendered for two steam cranes. The trust was awarded a total of 114 wagons on the narrow gauge wagon tender and the total value, including the crane, was R876 397.80. The task of working through the wagons has been on the go for some two weeks and the Trust has a team working full time down in Port Elizabeth. There is some confusion regarding wagons that were awarded to Sandstone but which do not seem to exist. There are three parties who are co-operating to try and resolve this, being Transnet, Reclam, which was also successful in being awarded some of the wagons and the Sandstone Heritage Trust.

Sandstone Heritage was awarded a 60 ton Cowan and Sheldon steam crane in Daanskraal. Reclam was one of the other successful bidders and Sandstone has negotiated with Reclam to acquire items from the Reclam cranes that would be needed to restore the Sandstone Crane. Rovos Rail was awarded a 36 ton crane as well.

The discussions that have taken place between Sandstone and Reclam were not limited to the above tenders and the two organisations, with Sandstone representing SIA, have reached an accord to work with each other in the future to preserve valuable items that would normally have been cut up.

The following press release was issued:

"30 March 2009
Johannesburg, RSA

PRESS RELEASE

Steam in Action and Reclam reach co-operation agreement
Joint Statement

Reclam, South Africa's largest metal recycling company has entered into an agreement with Steam in Action to cooperate with respect to the saving of what is left of South Africa's rail, transportation, agricultural and military vehicle heritage. Reclam by its very nature processes very large tonnages of steel, much of which is of interest to the heritage community. As a result of recent discussions and through a demonstration of close cooperation a number of steam cranes, components, narrow gauge wagons and other items have been diverted at the last minute from the scrapping programme into preservation.

Mr. Clayton Forster of Reclam said, "We are in a unique position to recognize that some of the items that we are asked to cut up for scrap and which we won on public tender are in fact of great interest to preservationists worldwide. In terms of this new agreement we will alert Steam in Action to any such eventuality in the hope that arrangements can be made to move these items to preservation so that future generations can not only enjoy them but help to understand our country's mechanical history."

Non Rail Steam Emergency

Dylan Knott writes: *"As a member of SIA, I feel we should not only be concentrating on steam railways, but also on the last few survivors of maritime steam vessels.*

Throughout last year I was involved in the cosmetic restoration of the last serviceable SAR&H steam pilot tug Alwyn Vintcent. This has been well documented on Sandstone's website. http://www.sandstone-estates.com/interim/Alwyn_Vintcent_tug/Alwyn_Vintcent_Report_October_2008.html. In August all work ceased and the vessel awaited shipping to Australia. Tragedy struck in December when the current owner suffered a severe stroke and all plans to ship the vessel were suspended. All attempts to contact the owner since February have been to no avail.

To date the ship has been moored alongside the SAS Somerset and her proud paintwork has begun to deteriorate in the harsh maritime environment. The birds have returned and the old girl is resembling a mess at present. The Maritime Museum is no longer interested in saving the ship either.

The V&A Waterfront have demanded that the vessel be removed without delay and even have a scrap dealer / contractor on standby to cut the ship up. A meeting is scheduled for April where a solution would need to be sought. It is my intention to attend this meeting and try and find a solution that does not include scrapping the vessel. In the interim a deadline will be set by which time the current owner needs to remove the vessel.

Selling the ship for scrap is a very likely possibility, but if this is allowed to happen we will lose the only steam tug in South Africa that is capable of being returned to working order. Not only that, but she is only 50 years old; a fine piece of maritime engineering at that. There are only three steam tugs left in South Africa at present. The AV is the identical sister ship to the JE Eaglesham that was preserved at Midmar and then scrapped.

Her steam plant is probably salvageable, in the event the vessel is scrapped, and if all else is lost this must surely be preserved. The same could be said for her wheelhouse which has its own character.

If a mooring could be secured for her at the Waterfront, then she might one day steam again taking many passengers for a sedate cruise around the harbour.

Tug Specifications:

Dimensions:	*Gross Tonnage:*	*Disp:*
27.43 x 6.10 x 3.36 (meters)	*111.02*	*212.95*

If anyone is interested in this vessel, please contact dylan.knott@hvrmanagement.co.za or +2782 850 1976. Perhaps as SIA we can come up with a viable plan? Photos of the restoration have been included."

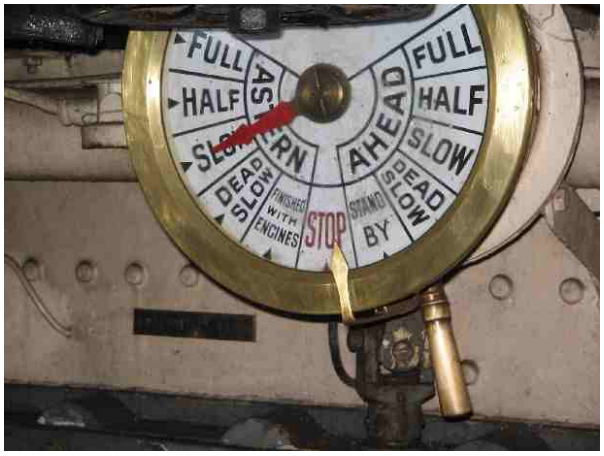












What is really happening in Southern Africa regarding Steam Preservation?

One should remember that not everybody communicates and therefore we do not necessarily have all that much information other than by looking on web sites as to what is happening.

Strangely enough although SIA is becoming a formidable organisation in terms of its ability to be noticed by the authorities, many long suffering preservation organisations appear to have given up. Here is an update as to what is happening.

We exclude the very active players like Reefsteamers (www.reefsteamers.co.za), Friends of the Rail (www.friendsoftherail.com) and the Sandstone Heritage Trust (www.sandstone-estates.com) because they have very effective web sites which are updated almost daily and we know that many SIA members monitor these developments on an ongoing basis.

Klerksdorp Museum

Daan van Rensburg.
Daan must take the credit for being one of the first people to break ranks with the Heritage Rail Association of South Africa and call a spade a spade. He wrote an amazing letter dated 12.01.2009 which we feature below. Not only did this letter alert SIA to the fact that the single biggest and most important artefact in the Klerksdorp Museum had been put up for tender for scrap, had in fact been sold to a scrap dealer, but due to a flurry of activity involving Daan himself and SIA's founding members we can report – and this is really good news – that the Heritage Department at Transnet instructed that the money be refunded to the reclamation organisation in question and that the unit should be saved. Daan is a member of a small organisation with very limited resources but he is not shy to fight the good fight. Well done Daan – your crane is an excellent example of the big Cowan Sheldon cranes that ruled the rails years ago. Without you as its champion it would now be on the boat to Japan.

See more good news regarding steam cranes in the Daanskraal report below. Click here to view PDF.

Umgeni Steam Railway

Umgeni Steam Railway battles on but they are not pro-active in terms of communicating with SIA. We hope that will change. Their web site is www.umgenisteamrailway.co.za.



Alan Paton Railway

As above. Their web site is: www.futurenet.co.za/pcngr.

Cape Town

We attach an excellent report from Ian Pretorius. (photo courtesy of PJ Odell)
www.atlanticrail.co.za





"In answer to your questions regarding steam in the Cape.

Dal Josefat loco depot was closed three years ago, when Transnet closed their Cape Town operations. This included the Union Limited train which is now staged at Voorbaai. The smaller locos were moved to Voorbaai. The three operating main line locos, class 15F 2916, class 25NC 3422 and the Red Devil class 26 3450 are in Cape Town at what we call Monument Station, where Atlantic Rail is based. We are looking after them for safe keeping. Some of the other larger locos were moved to the Cape Western Preservation Group in Epping.

A full study was done on behalf of the Western Cape government on the future of the Choo Tjoe. It was presented to the MEC for the Western Cape, Mr. Garth Strachan. This presentation was on Friday, 13th March and I believe that an official statement is imminent. Regarding operating steam in the Western Cape, we are at present having a problem with Metrorail, who have stopped us running on their lines. We are busy with the paperwork issue and making slow progress. We hope to be running again in a month or so."

Steamnet 2000, Kimberley

PJ Odell writes: *"My promised update/report still not done. That's what comes of leaving everything to "volunteers" – there's more work than hands. I can confirm however that 25NC locos 3437 and 3482 have been hydraulically tested by us and no faults found. In my opinion they are now ready for certification by a boiler inspector and could be running within a 4 month timeframe. No point however in doing that until something to pull..... will send a couple of photos which will at least help to make up for lack of a proper report.*

As the upgrading of the Belmont-Douglas line has been put on hold due to provincial government not paying their share of the bill for work so far done, we came to realise that a Class 24 might be needed after all. So we have spent the last 4 months concentrating on Beaconsfield's ex prestige 24 No 3654. Like those we did 12 months ago we have moved it to our site, secured it, put on cab security gates and sourced most of the missing parts. Volunteers hands have "bagged" the 5 or so tonnes of old coal and the tender coal space has been chipped clean and treated with "russist". This weekend we hope to apply a top coat and cover the whole area with "sinkplaat" to stop further rain entering. It's debatable whether we then spend any more money on a loco for which we still await L/L approval.....

I was delighted to be used by FOTR in a driving capacity this week from Cullinan. Their locos cannot be beaten for maintenance and their organisation and compliance with RSR/TFR requirements etc. is outstanding."



William Higgo hand pumping 25NC 3437 to 18 bar plus 9/08 at Beaconsfield. Photo: Peter Odell



William, Peter and Chris working on 3482 9/08. Photo: A Schanknecht



9/08 3437 & 3482 being worked on at Beaconsfeld. Photo: A Schanknecht

The Apple Express, Port Elizabeth

SIA was surprised at the lack of intervention by the Apple Express when major tenders were issued which have started to decimate what was the Avontuur Line and railway assets. Inexplicably the line of very sad NG15's is still standing on the seashore at Humewood Road. The depot has been destroyed by vandalism and by salt laden sea air. Numerous offers to move the NG15's to safety at Humewood Road have been ignored by the Transnet Heritage Foundation and sadly our Chief Engineer, Lukas Nel, now reports that they are too far gone to be of value. In fact if one attempted to pick them up they would disintegrate into piles of rust. This is unforgiveable because only 3-4 years ago they were still in sufficiently good condition to be saved.

One of the great tragedies of the change of heart that we are starting to detect, is that it is in many cases too late. Patients were reported in dire straits some years ago and now that ambulances are starting to arrive we have no option but to report that many of these patients have died. We should learn from this because many of the plinthed locos in South Africa are well on their way to a similar fate and that is why we would like to mobilise SA members to focus on an asset that is visible and then to actively investigate what its future really is and what should be done to secure it.

On a more positive note the Apple Express is definitely working on restoring an NG15, which will apparently debut on the 2-ft Narrow Gauge tour of South Africa organized by Geoff's tours (see www.geoffs-trains.com) We will obviously report on that steaming once it has happened.

Reefsteamers

A sneak preview of some shots this week of the Boiler Test on the newly restored 12 AR and then the trundle on the balloon. http://picasaweb.google.com/DysieS/12ARBoilerTest?authkey=Gv1sRgCK_KouXAq4ihaw&feat=directlink



Stop the Press!

The 12AR passed her steam test today with flying colours and her new 3-year certificate has been issued. After certification and lots of preparation we steamed her out of the workshop and did some testing to be sure she was fine. She runs well like a Swiss clock. She will run her first revenue run on Sunday, 29th March to Magaliesburg.
To all of you who helped with her rebuild, well done!

A major announcement is due shortly from Reefsteamers regarding their future plans for their ex SAR original Germiston loco depot. There are some practical issues to be dealt with but members cannot help but be impressed by Reefsteamers commitment. This is a good opportunity for us to remind SIA members that they can join Reefsteamers direct. Please see attached. There are different categories of members, together with a membership application form. Click here to view PDF.

Reefsteamers have been offered an attractive old derestory coach. They are currently engaged in discussions with the Rotary Club in Virginia to bring this item back into preservation.

Here is some feedback from Lee Gates:
"I've been corresponding with a fellow called Steve Dawe, who works for a company called Duraset. He is an armchair steam enthusiast and follows our activities at Reefsteamers as well as being a member of Steam in Action. His MD, knowing of his railway interest, has tasked him with finding a new home for a coach that the company uses as a bar and a club house at their Virginia premises in the Free State."

Yet another example of a Steam in Action member who has taken the bull by the horns and decided that this coach had a future.







Friends of the Rail

Sunday will be a good day for SA steam ...
FOTR is delighted to have a working 15F again!

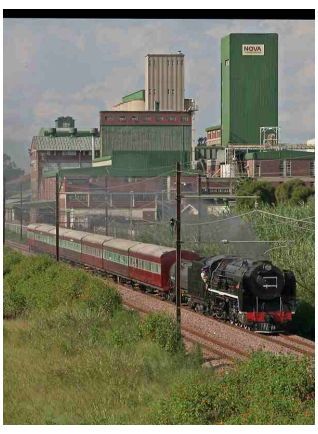
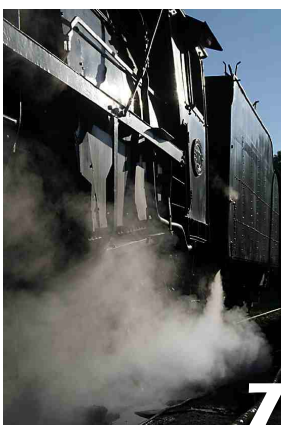
After resident No 3094 was withdrawn with boiler problems around 2003, we started to think in earnest of getting 3117 back on track. This loco was acquired from Germiston in 1998 as a future reserve for 3094, as it was known to be mechanically sound with a good boiler. And so, after years of rusting, the great hulk began to undergo restoration. Although fitter-in-chief John Dadford had already done some work on her, the big push began late in 2006. After 2 years of pain, joy and hard work, we finally got the boiler certified in September 2008. Steam testing was performed on 4 October and was a great success. Later that afternoon, she moved under her own steam for the first time in 16 years, throwing her whistle high into the summer sky! Three weeks later she was in steam again, to see if the steam leaks and problem areas identified had been properly repaired.

This led to a light engine test run out to Koedoespoort. With a big push, we were able to get her ready for her first train, a Tshwane Explorer on 16 December. A huge crowd awaited the locomotive's arrival at Hercules, and what a sight she made as she broke the tickertape and was christened with a bottle of champagne. Her first train consisted of 12 vehicles, which she handled with ease. Driver Cliff Petzer kept her well in check and the only problem experienced was a water shortage at Pretoria North. 3117 is fitted with an original small tender and is stoker-fired. After an impromptu watering from the fire-hydrant we were underway again. This day was a great highlight in the history of the club!

Following her Christmas holiday, 3117 was rostered again on the Tshwane Explorer of 1 March. This time we took a feeder tank along, but with old fireman Nathan Berelowitz onboard and handfiring the big box for fun, no extra water was needed. Once again the trip was faultless.

The technical staff have now declared loco ready for the Cullinan line. By the time you read this, Sunday 29 March will have come and gone, and the trip will be a happy memory. We have great hope that this classic loco will be around for all to enjoy for many years to come.



Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe

There is great interest in what is happening with regard to the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe. SIA queried the matter and have received the following reply:



"Hi Wilf
I, as CEO of Knysna Tourism, have been serving on the Provincial Steering Committee.

The executive summary of the two business cases have been handed to the Minister and will be tabled at the Standing Committee.

Following that, there may be ads placed to invite expressions of interest in getting involved with one or both of the routes. That's the one fingered typist summary as it stands, but feel free to call me on 0832872740 for a fuller update.

I look forward to meeting you at some stage, Nigel raves about your facility after a few beers next to the lagoon.

Cheers from the beautiful town

Shaun van Eck
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Web: www.visitknysna.co.za
Web: www.tourismknysna.co.za



Subsequently Mike Myers spoke to Rod Douglas of the Western Cape Government and received the following update:

"1. The consortium who was given the job to put together a feasibility study have just handed their recommendations to the provincial government. They have put forward two proposals one for the George to Knysna section and the other for the George to Mossel Bay section. The proposal includes the feasibility study with respect to the lines and a proposed business model. The business model is based on extensive financial audits and operating overheads and income.

2. Transnet has indicated that they would like to have this concluded as quickly as possible.

3. Rod says that the whole thing is now urgent and that he thinks that within the next 2 – 4 weeks they will begin to approach possible operators and try to conclude the appointment ASAP."

SANRASM

SANRASM is an enigma. It started out with the best of intentions but there has obviously been a policy change because the current activities do not appear to mirror the documentation that they produced at the outset.

There is no doubt that a great amount of effort has been spent negotiating for locomotives to be donated to SANRASM, money has obviously been spent in moving them but they have been accumulating on what looks to be a very insecure site at Chamdor near Krugersdorp. An SIA inspection took place a little over a month ago and the results were published in our February newsletter. In fact there are two sites being the original SANRASM site adjacent to the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine and then there is the new site which unfortunately is adjacent to an informal settlement.

Inexplicably locomotives are still being sourced to go to the latter site where they are in danger and where they have little chance of survival. In some cases they may have been better off had they been left on the mines where they came from because generally mine owners are benevolent towards them. Of course there have been cases where decisions are made to scrap them and then emergency action needs to be taken so we need to give credit where credit is due. Those that are at Chamdor at least survive and we will never know what their fate might have been had they stayed where they were. They are however endangered again so one would think that there needs to be a new approach if they are going to ride out this century successfully.

Steam in Action has been rebuffed by SANRASM but not on any logical basis. The invitation below for a meeting was sent to them by one of the Advisory Board members.

"Dear Mr. Posniak,
Steam in Action has just under 800 members worldwide. Internally there is a significant amount of communication regarding the deteriorating state of the assets at SANRASM, both at the main Krugersdorp site as well as at Chamdore.

A number of our senior Advisory Board members have asked for a meeting with the SANRASM board to discuss this. Our approach is one of cooperation and mutual exchange of ideas with a view to enhancing the interests of Railway Preservation in South Africa.

We have some significant people in this organisation who have proved that they can raise funds and bring considerable influence to bear where necessary.

My personal observation is that SANRASM appears to be becoming ever more isolated from the mainstream of what is best for Rail Preservation in this country and since we are an umbrella organisation we think it is time that we hold strategic discussions with yourselves.

Please let me know where and when this might be possible.
Regards,
Michael C. Myers"

Another Advisory Board member, Les Smith, received a phone call to say that SIA had ulterior motives in wanting to hold such a meeting. It is probably a good idea to put that one to bed in its entirety. SIA members work for free. SIA members do not trade in rail items in any shape or form. That is not to say there aren't people out there who buy and sell things but we are in the business of securing them, moving them to a safe location, and then incorporating them into a sensible plan for the future so by far the greatest number of people can ultimately see them, whether they be locals or whether they be visitors from overseas.

Lawrence Posniak responded to Les Smith's initiative on 18th March as follows:

"Hello Les,

I think some clarification is required. I, personally, have absolutely no problem with any individual member of SIA or Sandstone. Nor do I have any criticism of what they are doing. To me the issue is more a fundamental difference in objectives. The primary objective of SANRASM, as contained in its constitution, is the creation of an industrial museum. Steam and railway preservation are only a small part of its objectives.

Building a collection, education and public interest are also key factors .An example of this is the fact that we see it as far more important to build a collection of historically significant material and have the site open for school visits (a priority) than actual rail preservation.

We will be the first to admit that we have a serious problem in achieving our objectives in that we are desperately short of people willing to take on management type activities and responsibilities. This is one of the prime reasons for the delay in cleaning up the site and reopening it!

The current Trusties of SANRASM fought VERY hard to get its non profit and Public Benefit Status recognised. It is a requirement of our registration as a Public Benefit Organisation that we act in the public interest. We are thus very wary of working with organisations which we perceive as not being transparently non profit and in the public interest. It is for this reason that I am reluctant to have any dealings with either SIA or Sandstone as they have not convinced me of their non profit status or that they are acting in the public interest. This is not to say that they aren't, but merely that they have not convinced me.

I wish to emphasize that it is a view of SIA and Sandstone and has nothing to do with individuals. On a personal level I do not have an issue with anybody and do not believe in having a grudge or animosity towards anybody. I also wish to emphasize that at no time have I ever portrayed either SIA or Sandstone in a bad light. I do accept that the difference in objectives could lead to some misunderstanding of the SANRASM stance. Within the framework of what I understand their objectives to be their achievements have been considerable.

Lastly, if the members of SANRASM are unhappy with its objectives or the way the trustees are attempting to achieve them then they are free to change them!

Lawrence

PS: Totally on a personal level I feel I need to point out that I am not a railway or railway preservation enthusiast. My main interest is in the broader aspects of industrial heritage and its social, political and economic impact as well as education. This is my personal interest and has nothing to do with SANRASM. However, the people who wrote the SANRASM constitution had similar views and this might account for the current misunderstandings with the broader railway preservation environment."

SIA COMMENTS:

SIA is a non Section 21 non-profit organisation with no income other than the donations from members. Those donations are currently unspent but will be accounted for when we are able to achieve a meaningful objective.

One of the safe havens that organisations often retreat in to when discussing Heritage is the so-called profit motivation. SANRASM has in fact cut locomotives up for scrap in order to raise funds. This is something that most people can understand. SIA of course calls upon a huge body of volunteers, enthusiasts and benefactors in order to achieve its objectives and is entirely incapable of turning a profit. One could spend literally millions and millions of Rands a month saving artefacts without any chance of ever recovering anything for them because there is no ready market for these assets.

SIA will continue to attempt to convince Mr. Posniak that we are not scrap dealers, we are not commercial traders in railway artefacts, and that we do have a genuine preservation motive. Of course we also have a pro South Africa motive and everything that implies. SIA will continue to engage with Mr. Posniak and will certainly respond to his concerns.

Finally, SIA would have been very happy to have dealt with these concerns as mentioned above but Mr. Posniak has declined every opportunity to meet with his organisation but we will keep trying.

Based on the fact that SANRASM misunderstands our motives Mike Myers followed up the first and so far unanswered (apart from telephonic comment) email with a second one which included a details on a project which is in fact very exciting within the SIA context.

From: Mike Myers [mailto:mikem@sandstone.co.za]
Sent: 23 March 2009 12:46
To: 'Lawrence Posniak'
Subject: FW: SHOWCASE SIA PROJECT - SANRASM
Importance: High

Dear Lawrence,

I hope you received my recent e-mail where I proposed that we get together. One of the items on the agenda is a SIA initiative to construct a high profile, much centralised tourist railway to draw attention to the merits of Steam Preservation and to generate funds. A very preliminary draft document is attached.

We know that you are far down the road with respect to the implementation of something similar where you run steam excursions.

2-ft Narrow Gauge has been selected because it is very inexpensive to operate and has a very gentle footprint on the landscape. SIA Advisory Board members have all spoken with one voice when they confirm that they would like to work in unity with the Steam Preservation movement and not to work against them.

We understand that SANRASM will be opening a museum with similar concepts and thoughts in mind and it is for that reason that we felt that we should harmonise whatever we might do and whatever SANRASM plans to do. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that the 2-ft Narrow Gauge railway we propose should in fact be on the SANRASM site and should be combined with the other development plans that are being implemented.

We are in possession of the attached brochure which is similar in concept to what we are planning to accept using a different gauge.

Yours sincerely,
Michael C. Myers

Once again we refer to the invaluable exchanges held between SIA members and our prestige group of UK based rail preservationists because after they had been to South Africa, visited Reefsteamers and the Sandstone Heritage Trust, they gave us some very well thought through and informed recommendations.

This galvanized SIA into looking at the possibility of creating a small but professionally run showpiece 2-ft Narrow Gauge railway in the centre of the greater Gauteng Metropolitan area and it was this document that was forwarded to SANRASM for comment. It underlined the fact that we are a transparent organisation in all respects, that we have no ulterior financial motives, and that we are very keen to work with anyone who has the same basic motivation as ourselves, namely to try and save something from what was here before.

The invitation to hold discussions on the question of this new tourist initiative which is designed to use the magic of small steam locomotives so that we can build up a much more powerful constituency of people who would like to see these locomotives have a future.

Obviously this is a subject that will be developed in-depth and SIA members will be kept informed on an ongoing basis.

SANRASM has a real opportunity to engage with literally thousands of people through SIA.

Click here to view SANRASM Brochure

Click here to view SIA Preliminary Draft Proposal for Steam Tourism in Gauteng

If we can't join them we have to compete against them

Many people in industry, particularly on the Mines, are recognising that the SANRASM exercise has not achieved the original objectives as published by SANRASM. SIA still hopes to have a dialogue with them but unfortunately that is still in deaf and dumb mode.



We were contacted by a senior executive of Billiton from Van Dyksdrift Colliery near Witbank. We were advised that a 12A locomotive was available to be rescued and that SIA was welcome to come and have a look. Mike Myers of the Sandstone Heritage Trust and Shaun Ackerman of Reefsteamers accepted their invitation with alacrity and Shaun's report appears below:

"Herewith attached a few pictures of our trip to Van Dyksdrift Colliery.

We also acquired an additional scanned image of the 12A hauling coal at Douglas Colliery in 1976 near to the end of a working career. A special word of thanks for Herman and Nicolene from Billiton for their interest and their support in saving this locomotive.

Based on my technical inspection it can be agreed that because the 12A is one of only two left in the world it should be saved as it is mechanically in a reasonable condition and the boiler also appears to be average even though I was not too happy with the firebox but no evidence of damage could be seen other than many leaking stays which are repairable in any event."

Arrangements are currently being made to move this locomotive by road from Witbank to Reefsteamers.





(Left to right) Leon van Tonder, Process Manager, Shaun Ackerman (sitting), Micheline Rörich, PA to the Acting GM, Mike Myers and Council Gumede, Safety Superintendent








Steam in Action Member's in Action

Eugene Armer took it upon himself to contact SATSA (Southern African Tourism Services Association - www.satsa.com).
This extremely useful initiative came about as a result of our request in the February newsletter that members speak up and flex their muscles as it were.

As a result of our positive response to his suggestion Eugene made the appointment, saw the CEO and has given us this excellent feedback.

Steam in Action will be communicating with Mr. Tatalias shortly. Thanks Eugene – you are an example to us all.

Member's Feedback

In the last newsletter we encouraged members to communicate with us, tell us a little bit about their personal situation, what they do for a living, and why they are interested in steam. We have had a reasonably good response and we have attached a number of these many CV's. The sentiments are similar but there is no doubt that our members are by and large people of stature with an immense contribution to make.

Ron Wiley

"I was born in 1943 and on a Sunday afternoons we used to go to my grandparents for tea, I have a recollection of my father stopping on the way home near a rail bridge on the Nottingham (England) ring road so I could watch a train go over the bridge. This would have been around mid 1944 and apparently my first words were something like "chew on a bridge".

My father was the General Manager of an engineering company and in 1947 he was responsible for arranging the shipment of 12 steam locomotives that should have gone to the Sudan in 1939 but were put in storage during WW2. They were sold to the Western Australian Government Railways and they offered my father a job but my mother would not leaver her family.

I watched steam die in the UK and immigrated to Perth in Australia in 1969, I spent six weeks working at the Midland workshops of the Western Australian Government Railways helping to rebuild a steam locomotive. I was offered a job in Adelaide that included either second-class air fare or first class rail fare on the Indian Pacific railway, it was not a difficult decision to go by rail. We traveled from Perth to Port Augusta in South Australia where the car was off loaded and we drove to 200 miles to Adelaide. The standard gauge rail line for the Indian Pacific now goes via Adelaide.

I am now retired to Victor Harbor about 80km south of Adelaide and we have Steam Ranger runs train along the coast between Victor and Goolwa each weekend. My hobby is restoring old stationary engines and writing about them but seeing a steam loco still stirs something in me 65 years on."

Rupert Gray

"Born Jhb 1949, lived in a 'mine house' at Geldenhuys, close to Jhb - Germiston line 'till 1955. (plenty of daily steam!) Vividly recall annual holidays to Dbn by train, 'clerestory' coaches behind a '15F" (Dad would always walk me to the loco, hand the driver & fireman a 'fiver' each for my two minutes on the footplate, all that gleaming brass!) out of Braamfontein (Trans Natal), head out of window (Dad always took goggles!) Lulled to sleep by wheel rhythm and intermittent whistling at 'level crossings' in 1st class 'top bunk', after excellent dinner in pillared diner'.Woken by change to 'boring electric' at Volksrust shunt!

<u>Past Involvement</u>
Joined "Natal Railway Museum" Hilton 1995 (Chairman was Allan Duff, then Bursar @ Michaelhouse) and NRM was an Umgeni Steam 'offshoot'. Because I was a Telkom technician (1970 - 1999) it was suggested that I work under the late Kevin ..... (damn Alzheimer's!) who was then their 'Train Lighting & Electrical' foreman. I learnt a tremendous amount from Kev, Loco dynamos, coach dynamos, batteries etc. We were fortunate to have several (ex Telkom) heavy duty 24v battery chargers 'donated' which we installed in the Dining, Kitchen, Bar & other key cars so that we could leave their batteries on 'trickle charge' between 'running days'.

With Kevin's passing I took over as 'foreman' and alternated this function with that of 'Train Manager' (running days) until my wife & our daughters (Dining Car 'waitrons') moved to Hillcrest (KZN) in Dec 2000, by then 'Kwa Zulu Railway Museum'. From day 1 joined RSSA, mem no: 2058

Current Involvement
Sadly, since moving to Hillcrest, work commitments have prevented my involvement at my previous level (I hear Umgeni's 13 BR or 19D) whistling at the level crossing in Old Main Rd, on the way to or from Inchanga on the 1st & last Sundays of each month. I remain a member of USR."

Leif Gaml

"I am nearly 60 years old (born 21-05-1949) and have been a professional railwayman for 35 years. I have been interested in railways since I was about 8 years old and have had railways as a hobby for nearly 40 years as I have been participating in railway preservation in the Danish Railway Club and at the Danish State Railways living museum.

I have been working with nearly all aspects of railways both practically and at the DSB Headquarters. I am now employed as railway accident investigation officer by the Danish Ministry of Transport. I have been the head shunter at 93 danish stations as a museum railwayman, have worked as fireman of steamtrain driver on more than 80% of the danish railwaylines.

I have been educated as signalman (dispatcher) at the state railways (DSB), educated as a Process improvement engineer in the workshops, educated as a foreman in the workshops. I have been member of and gone through one of the management development schemes at DSB. I have been working with planning, economy, HR and so on.

The last 6 years at DSB I was deputy head of the safety department of DSB S-train division.

In 2002 I went to the National Railway Authority as a Railway approval officer and has as such been approving firemen, steam locomotive drivers and steam engines.

In 2005 I went to The Accident Investigation Board.

I do have a special interest for S A steam locomotives and railways. I do acknowledge the great problems the preservation societies in South Africa is facing with a government which do nothing for the heritage, the railways and so on."

Eugene Armer

"My interest in railways (not just steam) stems from childhood and model railways. Later, while in high school at Pretoria Boys, from photographing the real thing with my good friend Nathan "Trainman" Berelowitz. Either riding our bicycles to Capital Park loco depot or riding the rails far and wide.

I worked for the old SAR&H Publicity & Travel Department for a number of years in their Special Projects Division, arranging ralifan tours, Steam Safari train tours, Drakensberg summer train tours and other special charters for private companies. On three occasions I accompanied Steam Safari tour trains as one of the management team.

After 7 years abroad in SARTravel offices, I eventually left SAR in 1993 (by now it was SATS) and entered the private sector inbound tourism industry. Since 1995 I have been running my own company, Wilro Tours & Transfers (Pty) Ltd, providing "wheels" to the inbound sector of the industry.

I will always have a love for steam locomotives, but today my main interest is photography of modern Spoornet / Transnet Freight Rail because it will too be history one day. I feel that there is perhaps too much emphasis on steam within the context of heritage rail. Rail tourism should provide the public at large with opportunities to experience rail travel as it once was, regardless of what motive power is up front. Of course, steam plays a big role, but other forms of heritage traction have unfortunately been neglected. It is the overall rail tourism experience that will have people coming back for more - Boon Boonzaaier proved that with his Bushveld Train Safaris."

Joseph Neethling

"I have been fascinated by trains since I was a child of 5 or 6. My parents had a smallholding very near Wattles station in the early forties and I was fortunate to observe a lot of rail activity. The sounds and sights of 15 F's barking at all hours of the day and night in the effort to climb the incline on the way to Wattles station before the fairly level stretch to Elsburg remain engraved on my mind forever. The whistle of a 15F is very special. Then there was the magical sight of the train to Durban with the incongruous blue and white dining saloon in the middle of the brown train on the way to Durban, little realizing that those were in fact the resurrected Union Ltd carriages.

I remember well the many journeys on the "South Coast Specials" from Germiston to Umkomaas for our annual July holidays and the many rail trips to Cape Town and back during my student days. The smell of leather and varnished teak!. Oh man! My heart and soul remains committed to rail travel and especially behind those magnificent steam machines.

Gentlemen, I am very happy to learn of the latest developments in respect of Steam in Action and I wish you well in your endeavours. I just wish there was something more I could do apart from contributing to the "ton of coal" to save some of the elements of our rightful heritage. If there is anything whatsoever that I can do from where I live please do not hesitate to call on me.

You have my full support and I would like to suggest that a petition be started to present to the "Deaf and Dumb" in high places. They simply have lost the plot."

Stan Patchet

"I've always been interested in railways. Unfortunately I've never been in a position to be an active member in any organization; my efforts have been as a supporter of various organizations.

I worked on Western Holdings, Welkom, from 1974 to 1985 and watched the NB tanks and ex-SAR 3BRs go past my office window. I can still smell the smoke... All the OFS mines used steam but President Steyn GM probably took the trophy, with an class 11 in polished green and black! They were going to last forever, but of course the mines wouldn't and they haven't.

For the past 16 years I've worked for the managing and operating contractor of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a nuclear waste repository. What I've learned here, and as a supporter of various historical rail organizations, is, I think, fairly relevant to the steam situation in South Africa. You've got to be serious and entirely dedicated to succeeding. You have to have a comprehensive and complete business plan. You have got to coopt the opposition; by bringing them into the organization or it's public/regulatory actions you essentially neutralize them. I'm not too sure what the top management of SAR is like, but reading between the lines, they are not going to do anything that jeopardizes their position. Somehow you've got to get them into a win-win situation. Here it is vital that you get the support of local government bodies. Usually this means funding and, perhaps more importantly in SA, jobs. Probably no different in SA."

Electric Locomotive

Steam in Action has made a formal approach to Transnet to acquire two rare Electric locomotives. These include a Vickers 1E and EW8 Class electric locomotives, as per photographs attached.

With the steadily improving attitude of Transnet towards Heritage we are optimistic that this application may be successful.





Press Coverage

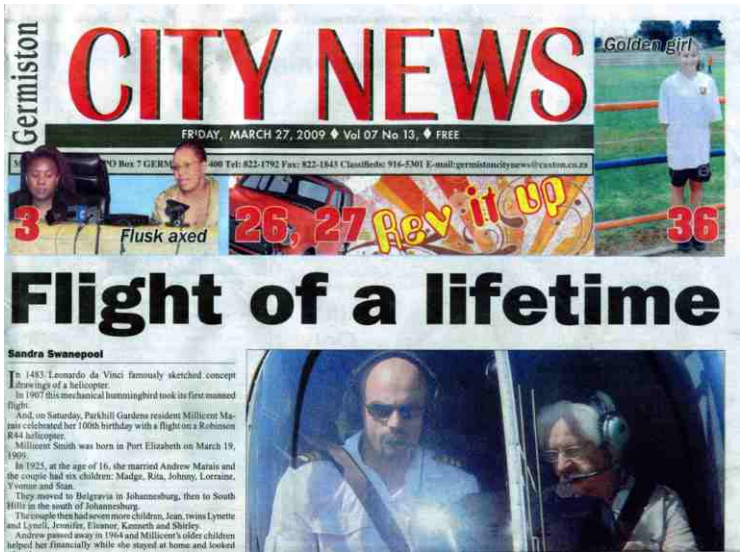
Some good, some bad. In the case of the attached Railways Africa article definitely bad.

David Rogers is being less than fair to Steam in Action and to the people like Reefsteamers, Friends of the Rail and others, who are working so hard to build on what have been very shaky foundations of late.

Our intelligence sources in the UK advise that he was not confident at getting the bookings due to the global economic meltdown. If that is true, and we believe it is, then he should have said so rather than tarring the entire Southern African Rail Tourism picture with a rather grubby brush. This tour could have gone ahead, it had the full support of the rail authorities who realized its importance, and in fact at the time that he sent the e-mail to Reefsteamers saying that he was cancelling the trip the authority had already been granted. This was brought to his attention but he chose to ignore it.

The good news is that another UK tour operator has almost certainly decided to run with the ball and they will receive the full support and cooperation from anyone and everyone involved. It is certainly not going to be a walk in the park – never was and never will be – but this type of misrepresentation of the true position on the ground is unfortunate. As far as David Rogers is concerned the glass is obviously half empty when we at SIA think it is half full. See article on next page.

Diane Sanderson of Reefsteamers has done excellent work in promoting a caring Reefsteamers... read the article.



Germiston

CITY NEWS

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009 ♦ Vol 07 No 13, ♦ FREE

Golden girl

3 Flusk axed

26, 27 Rev it up

36

Flight of a lifetime

Sandra Swanepoel

To 1483: Leonardo da Vinci famously sketched concept drawings of a helicopter.

In 1907 this mechanical hummingbird took its first manned flight.

And, on Saturday, Parkhill Gardens resident Millicent Marais celebrated her 100th birthday with a flight on a Robinson R44 helicopter.

Millicent Smith was born in Port Elizabeth on March 19, 1909.

In 1925, at the age of 16, she married Andrew Marais and the couple had six children: Madge, Rita, Johnny, Lorraine, Yvonne and Stan.

They moved to Belgravia in Johannesburg, then to South Hills in the south of Johannesburg.

The couple then had seven more children, Jean, twins Lynette and Lynell, Jennifer, Eleanor, Kenneth and Shirley.

Andrew passed away in 1964 and Millicent's older children helped her financially while she stayed at home and looked



22 GERMISTON CITY NEWS, FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009 Got a story? Call Sandra on 822-1792

Dreams do come true for six year-old

Christiaan Joubert is only six years old and suffers from acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

He has always dreamed of riding on a real steam train and meeting the driver.

Last Saturday his dream came true, thanks to the Reach for a Dream Foundation and Reefsteamers.

Reefsteamers, a Germiston-based organisation that operates steam trains, treated Christiaan to a very special day out on the steam train run to the Magaliesburg.

On his arrival at Maraisburg Station, on the West Rand, he was introduced to the driver, Shaun Ackerman, and allowed to climb into the cab. After a lunch stop he returned to the train to enjoy his ride home.

When asked what he enjoyed most about being in the cab of the locomotive, Christiaan said: "Blowing the whistle."

Christiaan Joubert in the driver's seat of the locomotive on which he rode last Saturday.

Children invited to reach for their dream

There can be few experiences as tough as facing a life-threatening illness.

For children who have their whole lives in front of them, this scenario is a particularly tragic one that plays out across the country every day, affecting countless children and their families emotionally, physically and financially.

The Reach for a Dream Foundation is encouraging children and their families and friends, particularly those from rural communities who wish to be part of this programme, to establish contact with the foundation as a first step on the way to making their dreams come true.

For 21 years now, the foundation has been bringing joy into the lives of children affected by diseases such as leukaemia, cancer, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, kidney failure and blood disorders, by making their dreams come true and providing a large measure of relief from the seemingly endless days filled with hospitals, treatment and medicine.

"Every child has hopes, wishes and dreams, but in the case of our 'Dream Children', these are all the more poignant given the incredibly trying circumstances under which they are forced to live their daily lives," said Sian Gutstadt, national marketing and advertising co-ordinator at the Reach for a Dream Foundation.

"Through our foundation and the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, we are able to reach out to these children and their families and to bring laughter and happiness into their lives.

"We believe in the power of dreams and in encouraging children to use their dreams to fight life-threatening illnesses.

"We have seen for ourselves the effect this has on the children, how their lives are enriched and how one magical moment can take away the monotony of hospitalisation and treatment and allow them to rediscover the joys and freedom of childhood."

According to Gutstadt, an interesting fact about life-threatening illnesses is that a larger percentage of children survive than adults do.

This, she says, is in part due to the fact that children simply have not learnt what life-threatening means – they live each day as it is given to them.

"For our special dream children attitude is everything, and we believe that they need all the encouragement they can get," she said.

"Whatever the dream, it often gives the child hope and courage to carry on the fight."

Children and their families who wish to be part of Reach For A Dream are invited to contact the Foundation on 011 442-0893.

Making kids' dreams come true

Preservation is an essential part of the picture

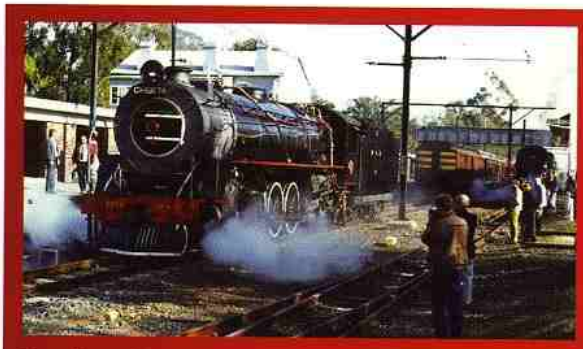
TOUR BOOKED OUT – BUT NOT TO BE

David Rodgers, organiser of a succession of acclaimed enthusiast rail excursions over South African rail lines in the course of many years, has had to cancel the tour planned for 2009, despite being fully booked within days of being announced. Though initial concerns to do with Reefsteamers' train availability seemed to have been resolved, he explains that an "overriding problem" has been "the impossibility of communicating with anyone in [official circles] who has the authority to make decisions or agree to anything.

"The central 53km Marseilles–Clocolan section of the 300km Bloemfontein-Bethlehem line is now technically 'closed' and it is no longer operated as a through route. Whilst the track remains in-situ we are unable to find anyone in authority to agree to its use or confirm the cost and extent of any remedial work prior to use. We are thus unable to fulfil the advertised programme as it is clearly almost impossible to visit Bloemfontein and then access the scenic northern section of the Bethlehem line.

"There appears to be a hardening of attitudes towards the use of steam on [South African] metals. Steam is now banned from 'core' routes, in effect being restricted to very lightly trafficked lines. For example, Friends of the Rail are no longer allowed to run to Witbank or north from Pretoria, both routes that they previously operated successfully. An electric pilot is required on the main-line south from Germiston. This is classed as a core route even though there are only a handful of trains and the line remains double track.

"We have been advised [without explanation] that we may now be unable to run east from Germiston on the secondary route to Devon, a lightly trafficked route that we have used regularly."



Linesiders with class 15CA no 2054



Class 25NC no 3407 "Pauline"



Class GO Garratt no 2575 and admirers

Reefsteamers advise that at best they would only have four locos available, not including the popular (and sole active) class 15CA which requires extensive boiler work. It is felt that having only two locos suitable for running south to the Free State is risky with no reserve. Neither the GMAM Garratt nor the class 12AR are suitable. Running weekday steam trains on the Krugersdorp-Magaliesburg line with its train-crew operated points is subject to delay by freight traffic, which has priority.

"We are required to stay overnight at Ficksburg for five nights whilst in the Free State as this is the only station retaining working water facilities for loco use. However it seems that since being de-staffed the station area has become vandalised and unkempt... with rubbish strewn everywhere and with drunks and vagrants leading to security concerns.

"There are a multitude of other concerns." Rerouting to Kwazulu-Natal has been considered but here there is only one working loco and one possible route - the attractive Richmond branch which is now closed following the theft of track. "So, there is no Plan 'B'."

In the light of such uncertainty and risk, and faced with an ultimatum to pay airfare deposits of £150.00 per person, it was felt that cancellation of the tour was the only option.

"We reluctantly conclude that the era of 1,067mm gauge steam [in South Africa] has effectively ended. This is all the more upsetting in that South Africa, even just 8-10 years ago, had plenty of suitable locomotives and working infrastructure to support the continued operation of steam for years to come. Experience has shown that South Africa has become a more difficult destination as each year passes... It has become increasingly apparent that, despite the enthusiasm of some of the clubs... there are no longer the resources, infrastructure or will to support the running of steam trains on the national network. For several years we have operated extensive photographic tours in South Africa and had hoped to pull off one final trip, but it is not to be."

"The whole market for overseas steam photographic tours is changing and the worsening recession and financial turbulence is making life very hard. US-based Trains Unlimited Tours (TUT) – perhaps the largest rail tour operator – recently went into liquidation."

"We are determined to continue offering tours as long there are suitable destinations and a market. As we have a huge interest we fully anticipate that a tour to Austria only will quickly become fully booked particularly as we have secured no less than 13 locos and the price is only 12% more than our similar tour two years ago! Our plan is to go to Italy for a stand alone, one-week tour as soon as circumstances allow. In addition, our planning continues for some big steam in the USA."

"Once again I am very sorry that events have forced cancellation of this tour."

- David Rodgers

[Enthusiastically spending their thousands of dollars and routinely returning to spend more, the well-heeled visitors Rodgers brought from Europe and America are a loss South Africa should not be able to afford. – editor (who also took the photos)]

From the Archives

It is not the function of the SIA newsletter to revel in the joys of the past where mighty engines thundered through the South African veld. However for new members who may only now be developing an interest we will continuously remind our growing community of steam and railway enthusiasts what things were really like.

A retired South Africans Railways fitter approached SIA to say that he would like to talk to like-minded people. Andy Selfe, one of our Advisory Board members, took on board the responsibility for becoming his 'custodian' and link to SIA and this wonderful from-the-heart report has been submitted by one of the older gentlemen of steam – one of the people who really saw it as it was. Click here to view PDF.

Attached are reminiscences by Albie Bester of working with Class 25 Condenser locomotives and particularly their tenders, until their conversion to 25NCs. Since receiving and compiling oom Albie's jottings, I have seen Paul Ash's father Kim's notes on the Ash family's involvement, along with Henschel, with the Class 25s, and I hope this fascinating story can be added to a future Steam in Action Newsletter. I have also seen superb photographs taken by Charlie Lewis when the locomotives were new; they will also be interesting to share with our readership, along with his descriptive captions.

It helps to understand that with a condenser locomotive, the spent steam doesn't go up the chimney, so in order to keep the draught going, there's a fan in the smoke-box. Albie explains the difficulties they had with the blades of these, and the reason for the characteristic hopper shaped container below the smoke-box. Instead, the spent steam is fed to the tender where five steam-turbine-driven fans drew air through massive radiators on each side, and effectively saved 90% of the water, making these immense locomotives, the most powerful rigid locomotives in Africa, capable of travelling 500 miles between refills!



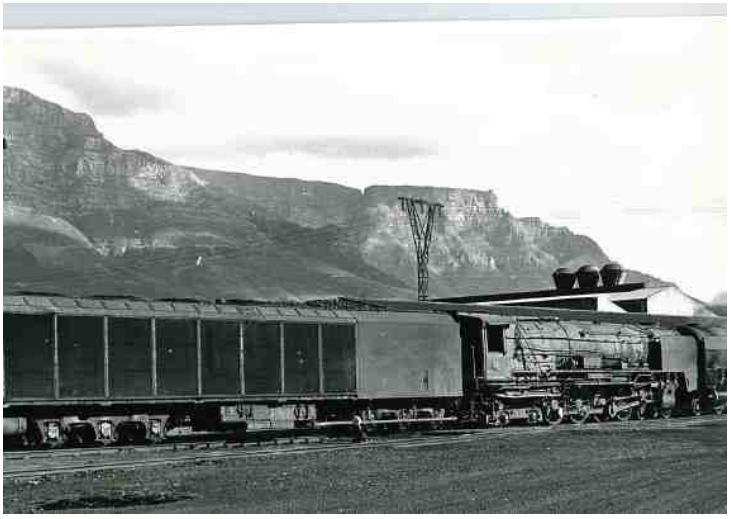
Driver Faan Willers and fireman Peter Odell working the last serviceable condenser, 3511 , possibly in February 1980, with the 1947 Royal Train 'headboard'

Incidentally, so great was SAR's faith in the Class 25 that 140 (90 of them Condensers) of them were ordered, off the drawing board, all in one go! The Class 25 was said to be SAR's most successful locomotive ever.

Below are photos of Class 25C and NC after conversion, with Cape Town's Table Mountain as a backdrop, quoting oom Albie:

Taken at Paarden Eiland by the Mechanical Engineer's office draughtsman----supposed to be the official ones.





Oom Albie kindly had his originals scanned and nearly lost them in the process! He also had others scanned, first and second photo being of Class 25C No 3511, named after his daughter Frieda.

I'm in contact with that Frieda, and she says when she gets cross, she smokes just like this!

Let this be a call to save what is left of these iconic locomotives and tenders!

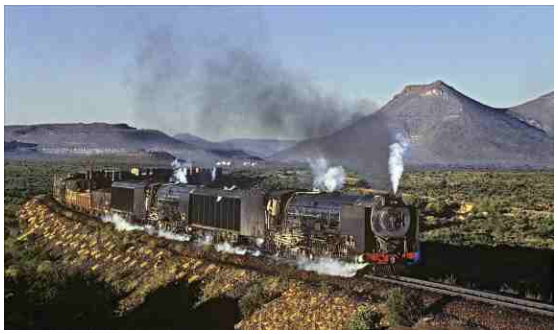




2 other photos--take note of the one just ex workshops----taken by Boucher the fitter on mechanical stokers at De Aar. Both with FRIEDA on the smokebox front. He had hundreds of photos taken at De Aar and I had quite a few. One specific one a Welshman got from me to put in their club house and just for the hell of it he begged one for himself.



Photo with stainless steel rods on tender radiator--looking like squares was taken at Touwsriver of 3496 on a special train-----taken by Mr. Erasmus of the loco supt. office in Cape Town.


Photos by Gary Barnes

Photographs

We mentioned last month that we did not think the SIA newsletter was a place for photographs. There are so many good web sites where members can look at top class photographs. However, Gary Barnes, a dedicated SIA member, has sent these wonderful nostalgic photographs with captions. We hope you enjoy them. See you next month!



C1787s1, 2-Up approaching Tweedside, Easter 1958



352s1, Laingsburg, 25s on down freight, Easter 1956



353s1, Touws River, departure of 203-Down, Easter 1956



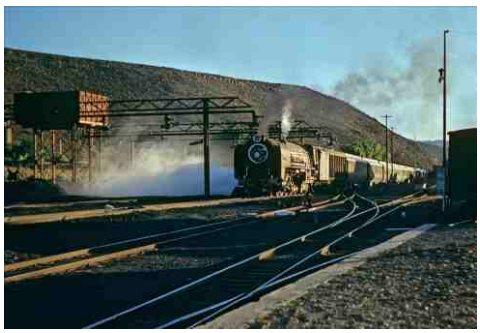
411 Engines, Class 25 condenser No 3494, Verster, June 1973-1



730s1, Touws River loco, July 1951



382 Engines, class 20, No 2485 as experimental condenser, July 1951



2413s1, Laingsburg, 1-Down scheduled stop for 1-Down, Easter 1956



2515s1, Touws River, 3451 and XXXX at the coal stage, Easter 1956



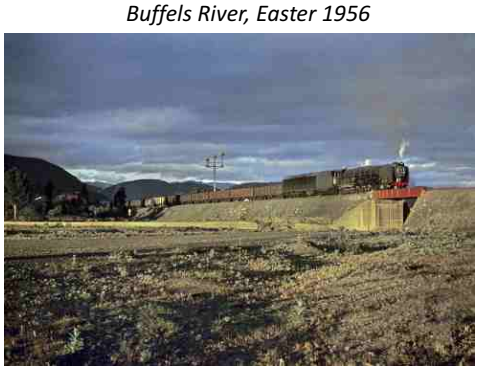
C1014s1, Laingsburg, class 25 on up freight crossing the Buffels River, Easter 1956



1004s1, Laingsburg, departure of 1-down, Easter 1956



2089s1, Touws River, 3493 at coal stage, Easter 1956



C1786s1, Laingsburg, down freight departing, Easter 1958

Steam in Action Credentials

A number of people have challenged Steam in Action's credentials. They are sound and can be accessed as follows:

http://www.cipro.co.za/ccc/EntDet.asp?T1=%DD%44%25%85%57%C0%1F%BA%17%BE%35%8C%BD%AB%24&T2=STEAM%20IN%20ACTION

Below is the information as it appears on the page.

Enterprise Details

Name Search | Enterprise Details

Enterprise details for 2007/035119/08

Please note: - If any of the information displayed on the page is incorrect, please DO NOT email us asking us to change it. Regulated information for CCs must be changed by submitting a CK2A and regulated information for companies must be changed by submitting a CM22. Non-regulated information can be changed by following the Change Corporate Information link.

Enterprise Name	STEAM IN ACTION
Registration Date	10/12/2007
Business Start Date	10/12/2007
Enterprise Type	Section 21
Status History	Formed 2007
Current Enterprise Status	In Business
Standard Industrial Classification	OTHER COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES
Telephone Area Code	011
Telephone Number	805 4692
Fax Area Code	0866
Fax Number	148 453
Registered Address	SUITE A1-01 1ST FLOOR BOCK A ELITE PARK RICHARDS DRIVE 1685
Postal Address	P O BOX 4240 HALFWAY HOUSE 1685
Email Address	joannewest@btinternet.com
Docex Address	
Web Site Address (URL)	www.steam-in-action.com
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Your comments, queries and suggestions are always welcome! Please email: joannewest@btinternet.com

This newsletter was produced by and on behalf of the members of the Steam in Action Advisory Board