



STOP THE PRESS!

WE HAVE JUST WON A VICTORY BUT NOT YET THE WAR!

MILLSITE DESTRUCTION HALTED!

On the instructions of Transnet, Reclam has suspended the cutting of locomotives and other items at Millsite. SIA visited the site yesterday morning (Wednesday 28th May) to find the only activity was the loading of previously cut items and the final stages of some pieces that had nearly been completed. SIA was told by the Transnet official present that cutting was suspended. He also told us that the locomotives in the preserved compound were not earmarked for cutting at this stage.

The whole process had come about as a result of a visit by the Transnet Chief Executive recently to some new facilities at the diesel depot where he saw the derelict locomotives next to the Coal Stage and asked that it be cleared and cleaned up. Although four previously identified heritage locos were cut, the GEA 4022 has not been touched and is still intact. Interestingly this locomotive operated as a banker for The Royal Train on the Montague Pass in February 1947.

We can only believe that the efforts of all the SIA members who responded to our circular to mail their dissatisfaction to Transnet have paid off together with those from Friends of the Rail and Reefsteamers who got the story into The Times newspaper on Tuesday 27th May. From Steam In Action we say a huge thank you to all who took the time to mail Transnet. Some of you copied us and others did not but your efforts succeeded. SIA member, Errol Ashwell has suggested to Transnet that SIA should take on the same presence as HRASA with Transnet as per his email below. Thank you, this was Steam in Action!

However we must not let up on the pressure and SIA will meet with Transnet in a few days to find a solution to the letter asking for the removal of all Heritage locos from Millsite and Humewood Road by 27th June. One loco on site is privately owned by the North British Locomotive Society in the UK, being Class 3BR No: 1488 and arrangements are in hand by SIA to remove this engine to safe storage.

The list of locos marked for preservation at Millsite is extensive (see the [attached list](#) from John Middleton which includes some now scrapped) and to save those that must be saved we are going to need funds for their removal and their ultimatum restoration in what ever form. A rough estimate of removal costs is R3-4Million using road transport with an expected timeline of up to 6 months or more. SIA will continue to press Transnet to render assistance in this regard but be aware of the sort of funds we require.

Sandstone Heritage Trust, one of the founders of Steam in Action, put forward these thoughts:

"Re: Urgent appeal for financial assistance.

Whichever argument we use when dealing with the authorities with regard to the saving of South Africa's National Rail Heritage and particularly the awesome locomotives that used to criss-cross the land in days gone by, the fact is that money generally lies at the heart of the problem. The authorities do not believe that most of the preservation groups have any resources and a major problem is the fact that they anticipate that since the preservation community can do nothing they might as well forego the administrative procedures which at least provides another opportunity to demonstrate that they might be able to do something. With very few exceptions there have been little practical steps taken by individual clubs and preservation organisations to physically remove locomotives, even after they had been allocated them. The primary objective of our Steam in Action global fundraising programme is to provide funding so that when we are in a critical situation with respect to a locomotive that has to be moved, particularly if there is a tight deadline, we have the resources to do it.

One of the very constructive ways of dealing with this is for individuals around the world to actually target a locomotive, buy it, and then work with people with logistics in the preservation community in South Africa to have the item moved to safety. That means that they have tangible value for their money and immediately become part of the bigger preservation effort."

Steam in Action needs your help now, click on the link below and pledge the funds. Without them we cannot go forward and all our efforts at Millsite will have been in vain, thank you.

[Click here to donate today!](#)



OUT OF STEAM: A once-mighty locomotive might be destined for the scrap heap

Picture: RICHARD STEVENS

Axe looms over historic trains

KATLEGO MOENG

SOUTH Africa is on the fast track to losing part of its locomotive heritage.

Transnet has — to the dismay of the Heritage Railway Association SA — decided to scrap prized heritage steam locomotives next month.

In a letter dated May 15, Transnet gave the heritage association until today to select the locomotives and coaches it wished to keep, either for preservation and restoration or for spare parts.

Rail historians said two weeks was not enough time to locate all the historical trains around the country.

Shaun Ackerman of Reef Steamers Association, which champions rail tourism and steam locomotive preserva-

tion, said Transnet told them the trains were beyond repair and an "eyesore", and should be scrapped.

"The ultimatum they have given us is not reasonable in terms of time and resources," said Ackerman.

The groups were further incensed because some trains marked for restoration had ended up at the Millsite train depot in Krugersdorp and were being hacked to pieces.

Ackerman and Andrew King, of another heritage preservation group, Steam in Action, visited the depot and were shocked to see old wooden-bodied coaches had been smashed up so the wood could be removed.

Transnet was not available for comment at the time of going to press.



Above: The Times article

Left: Some of the locomotives in the Millsite Compound

ERROL ASHWELL'S EMAIL

From: Errol Ashwell
Sent: 28 May 2008 09:14
To: Vuyo.Kahla@transnet.net
Cc: Cecilia.Machaba@transnet.net; Wilma.Oosthuizen@transnet.net; David Richardson
Subject: RE: VERY URGENT and IMPORTANT: Illegal Scrapping of National Heritage Assets
Importance: High

Dear Mr Kahla

As you are aware, my email below has been referred to you by Ms Ramos.

As I said below, there are thousands of individuals in South Africa who are trying to make a difference in our country by saving our heritage and developing a thriving heritage tourism industry.

We realise that it is not practical for each of us to communicate directly and effectively with Transnet - and Transnet is obviously a key role-player in these efforts.

We understand that Transnet has recognised HRASA as one of the representative organisations with which it will communicate - and that makes sense. Unfortunately, HRASA is an organisation representing only current operating heritage railway organisations. It does not directly represent the many individuals or other organisations that are trying to make a difference in South Africa. For them to communicate via HRASA is impractical if not impossible.

I would urge Transnet to please add 'Steam in Action' (<http://www.steam-in-action.com/>) to your direct communication list, as this organisation represents thousands of individuals and organisations - all over the world - who wish to develop South African heritage and tourism opportunities. Mr David Richardson, Executive Director of Steam in Action, is copied on this email.

If issues, such as the scrapping at Millsite, are discussed directly with Steam in Action (as well as with HRASA) I believe that you will be pleasantly surprised at how much immediate positive cooperation you will receive.

Please advise if it will be possible for Steam in Action to formally open up positive, direct, communication links with yourself.

Kind Regards
Errol Ashwell."