



steam in action

south africa

EDITION 18 KEEPING TRACKS MAY 2009

Welcome

to the May newsletter.

Membership total as at 29th May 2009: 795

More good news this month. Our membership has almost passed the 800 mark and we have an unprecedented number of e-mails and comments from our members. Response to our two special bulletins, namely Mozambique and our appeal for the stranded Cowans and Sheldon Steam Crane at De Aar, were very well supported.

A lot of our members advise that they are too busy to read an extensive newsletter, which of course is supplied in .PDF form so that it does not jam your e-mail. This of course requires that members be connected to the Internet but we suspect that most Steam and Railway Preservationists are connected and use the Internet extensively to serve their interests and to keep themselves updated. If members have any specific comments or recommendations regarding the newsletter and the way in which it reaches them we would be happy to look at their recommendations.

Since the last newsletter a new government has been appointed to South Africa and the word has certainly gone out to the lower echelons of government and to its civil service that they will be judged by their performance. We see a slight flicker of activity from many dormant sections of the bureaucracy but whether this results in tangible action remains to be seen. Steam in Action's approach will remain robust and we will hold people accountable. In our own small way we are doing something similar to what The Daily Telegraph did in exposing the many hundreds of MP's who perhaps forgot that they were answerable to the people and were appointed to run the affairs of government with integrity.

That is the same message we will be sending to the officials in South Africa responsible for Railway Heritage.

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Perhaps the really big news this month is that we have been advised that in the June SIA newsletter a major announcement will be made concerning a substantial Steam tour of South Africa. The larger clubs and operators like Reefsteamers, Friends of the Rail etc. have been talking to each other and talking to overseas tour groups and are close to finalising a major initiative. Of course there are officials who hold the future of such a tour in the palm of their hands, and again indications have been received that they now recognise that the 2010 World Cup Soccer event and the fact that it is the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Railways in South Africa both warrant some special recognition. Steam in Action is therefore working with all parties to encourage a diverse and interesting Steam Safari which will include Cape Gauge and Narrow Gauge adventures.

We would like to take this opportunity of providing SIA members with an early warning of these plans and we have agreed with the major clubs and the tour operator that SIA members will be the first to receive the official tour announcement. Many of you have expressed tremendous support and perhaps now we will have an opportunity to enable you to enjoy a hands on experience to back up the moral and financial support that many of you have provided to date.

As always read on and let us have your thoughts, comments and even criticisms.

Breaking News!

International Tour Company announces two Steam tours for 2010.

(Photographs taken during the recent Geoff Train's Tour of a number of South African Narrow Gauge Railways. These photographs were taken from the visit to Sandstone Estates in the Eastern Free State.)





GEOFF'S TRAINS LIMITED
PRESS RELEASE
Wednesday, 27 May 2009
SOUTH AFRICAN STEAM 2010

"Geoff's Trains Limited successfully concluded a South African tour in May that focused primarily on two foot narrow gauge railways. This is the only international steam enthusiast tour expected to visit South Africa in 2009, which means that the Cape Gauge preservation movement will receive no substantial international exposure or support - a sad waste of resources, enthusiasm and opportunity.

Steam is very much alive in South Africa and Geoff's Trains is working with the steam clubs to prove that outstanding tours are possible given the correct planning and support. As a result, we are delighted to announce that a comprehensive rail tour should run in South Africa in the second half of May, 2010.

We are working with Reefsteamers, Friends of the Rail, the Sandstone Heritage Trust and other players to develop a tour that includes as many locomotives and routes as possible. These should include the well known lines in Gauteng, the Free State and Natal along with some exciting additions. The tour has the full backing of Steam in Action and the Heritage Rail Association of South Africa who are both working hard behind the scenes to gather in the necessary support from the Railway and other service suppliers.

The tour will appeal to steam photographers, but it will also give consideration to other aspects of the rail tour scene, offering interesting steam train rides and alternative touring wherever practical for participants and their partners. It is not the policy of Geoff's Trains to maximise the number of run-pasts each day, but to offer a quality steam experience with a reasonable number of quality photo opportunities.

We are working closely with the various stakeholders to develop a tour that is interesting, value for money and – most important – sustainable and acceptable to the railway authorities. Future tours cannot emulate those that have run in the past, they must encompass the needs of South Africa's modern railway that faces strict economic, operational and safety constraints. This railway renaissance offers exciting challenges that are being embraced to develop a sustainable tour.

An itinerary will be published on the Geoff's Trains website soon. However, it will help a great deal if you contact us now to advise your interest. As soon as we have route confirmation the tour will be advertised and bookings will be taken, you will be in a strong position to take advantage of this if you are already on our mailing list.

Geoff Cooke
Managing Director
Geoff's Trains Limited
www.geoffs-trains.com
Email: geoff@geoffs-trains.com"

SIA COMMENT: This is heartening news and of great interest to SIA members many of whom have asked what upcoming tours are being planned. It is appropriate to comment on Geoff Cooke. He has run more steam tours in Southern Africa than any other operator, the first of which ran in 1986.

Geoff Cooke's enthusiasm for running tours next year is obviously based on the success of his most recent tour. Sandstone has received the attached letter from Geoff Cooke.

"Geoff's Trains Ltd
69 Pitt Street, Kidderminster, DY10 2UN
Telephone: 01562 632000
email: geoff@geoffs-trains.com
www.geoffs-trains.com
Registered in England and Wales # 5639059.
Directors: S L & G E Cooke

05 May 2009

Sandstone

Dear Mike

I am delighted to report that our recent tour to Sandstone was an outstanding success.

The Reefsteamers team were exceptional, willingly operating the service in a thoroughly professional way. They are an asset to you that should be nurtured and used in the interest of your two organizations and South African steam preservation generally.

The catering was as usual on time, top quality and varied. The menu selection proved ideal for the occasion, and the catering team appeared to enjoy the experience.

Your own staff could not be more helpful, quietly working in the background to ensure that the estate was seen in an impressive light.

The weather was changeable, with cloud sometimes affecting photograph. However, all of the locomotives that operated did share a reasonable amount of good lighting, and so we were fortunate to avoid a washout in any of the five operating sessions.

The only mechanical problem noticeable was the inability of the NG4 locomotive to work the allocated load, reportedly because of a regulator fault. This did not impede a good amount of travel and photography, but did result in a return after dark.

Charles Barrett kindly showed 13 of the group around his military museum. This was greatly appreciated, as was the transport in your personnel carrier, a highlight for many! I would certainly consider including such an offering in future visits.

The water tank at Mooihoek worked well, adding a new dimension for the Lawleys. I hope you enjoy seeing the photographs that resulted. The ox wagon, Sherman tank and a tractor run past were all great fun and really appreciated.

The hotel at Ficksburg is adequate for its purpose, I received no complaints regarding the rooms and much praise for the catering.

To summarise, this was a successful visit that has created a strong desire to make sure that you are included in our plans for 2010.

Best regards,

Geoff Cooke
Managing Director
Geoff's Trains Limited."

Railways Create Jobs

We should not forget that railways create jobs.

Here is a picture of some of the cleaning ladies on the Sandstone Narrow Gauge Railway enjoying a break and a short train ride.



Advisory Board Update

Elize Lubbe of Reefsteamers has tendered her resignation as an Advisory Board member. With her full time job, personal commitments and her chairmanship of Reefsteamers we have agreed that she should not be placed under any additional pressure, and in fact the Advisory Board feel that this is a positive development.

We are pleased to welcome Oscar Sabatini to the Board.

Transnet

Update on Discussions

As you are aware from the agenda published in the April SIA Newsletter SIA recently held discussions with Transnet on a number of issues. We have unfortunately had very little response from Transnet but we are pursuing the issues raised. Below is an update regarding our attempts to try and get a letter from Transnet supporting steam tourism in 2010.

We have unfortunately so far been let down by Transnet as they have never produced the promised letter. One hopes that SIA's optimism that they were actually getting through to senior management at Transnet is not misplaced. The correspondence below sent to Susie Mabie of THF is as a result of further telephonic discussions on the subject.

"From: Mike Myers [mailto:mikem@sandstone.co.za]
Sent: 22 May 2009 09:45 AM
To: 'Susie.Mabie@transnet.net'
Subject: Our discussion on the letter refers
Importance: High

Dear Susie,

Further to our telephonic discussion the morning this is the extract from the minute that I am referring to with respect to the letter.

VK advised that a fresh start would be attempted to clarify the rules of engagement. This would take place from July to December 2009. Issues that would be finalised would be Rolling stock, Concessions, subsidies etc. The framework for this would be completed by December of this year, and the implementation thereof would begin in January 2010. Transnet Freight Rail said it would send out a letter to SIA asking us what we would like to do. The concessions would be open to the movement of freight as well as passengers.

MM pointed out that by the time this process had been completed the Soccer World Cup would be history and that if Rail Tourism organisations were to be a part of this something would need to be done long before in order for planning, marketing etc to be effective.

VK acknowledged that this would be a problem.

MM suggested that it would be advantages if Transnet could deal with tourism issues while the process was on going to see if some interim arrangement could not be set up to accommodate tourism.

He further suggested that Transnet should write a letter to SIA advising that Transnet was supportive of trying to get rail tourism going and that in order to facilitate this it would be helpful if all SIA members could submit their tourism requirements through SIA. (ACTION VK)

We are cautious in committing to 2010 at this point because the tour being mentioned is coupled to a 3'6" grand tour but the letter would go a long way in giving us some clarity. The cost of putting a tour like this together is prohibitive so we must have our ducks in a row.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Michael C. Myers"

Stop the Press!

The following letter addressing some of the issues was received from Transnet just as this edition was about to be released, but did not address the email above specifically. The SIA Advisory Board members have just been sent the letter and have obviously not had time to digest the contents, but we thought it important that all members have sight of it immediately. We have no doubt that this letter will elicit much commentary and discussion which we look forward to.

Vuyo Kahla, Group Executive: Office of the Group Chief Executive

TRANSNET

Mr Mike Meyers
Sandstone Estates
748 Richards Drive
Elite Park
Suite A1-01
1St Floor, Block A
Midrand
1685

Dear Mr Myers

STEAM IN ACTION

I refer to your email of 22 May 2009 and address you thereon as set out below:

1. **Letter from Transnet regarding the branch lines**

   As reported at our meeting, Transnet is still in discussions with Government on the plan for Branch lines. Announcements will be made in this regard as soon as such discussion shave been finalised .

2. **The list of SIA membership**

   We note with appreciation the list of Steam in Action members submitted. We accept the requirement that this list not be disclosed by Transnet.

3. **Millsite logistics**

   In our email correspondence to you dated 14 May 2009, we thanked you for your continued support, but also re-iterated that the movement, and any matters related to the Millsite assets, is the responsibility of HRASA.

   As you are aware, we have donated these assets to HRASA. We met with the body on the 26 May 2009, and reached an agreement on how it, as an organisation, will manage the relocation of the assets at Millsite.

   Thank you once more for your quotation regarding the movement of the assets. However, we trust that you will understand that this matter will be managed by HRASA, as it is its assets. Furthermore, HRASA has committed itself to an action plan for the removal of these Millsite assets.

4. **Missing wagons**

   The Transnet Foundation contacted the relevant people to gain clarity on this matter. This issue is being managed by Mr Dewald Swanepoel of Transnet Freight Rail ("TFR"), with whom I understand you to be in contact. Mr Brian Murison, from the Transnet Foundation,

has reported that TFR has allocated someone to physically walk the railway line in search of these assets.

We again express our regret at this situation, and trust that the matter will be resolved with TFR speedily.

5. Movement of wagons

We have referred your request to Mr Dewald Swanepoel at TFR, who will advise on how best they can assist.

6. Guarding of locomotives in Bloemfontein

I express our deepest gratitude to you for your generosity in offering to guard the locomotives in Bloemfontein. Given the historical significance of these locomotives, we will also put a security plan in place. Please advise us of the timing of your exit, so that we can ensure that there is no period during which there is a gap in the security arrangements.

I sincerely hope that the above addresses the concerns raised.

Kind regards

Vuyo D. Kahla
Group Executive: Office of the Group Chief Executive
Date: 28 May 2009

Mocambique

The superb support that we are receiving continues. However, we have not actually had a detailed response to our original letter from CFM and we are urging them to respond to our earlier thoughts and recommendations.

Here are additional contributions from SIA members:

"From: Jonathan Flood [mailto:jonathan.flood72@btinternet.com]
Sent: 08 May 2009 15:16
To: mesquita.a@cfmnet.co.mz
Cc: joannewest@btinternet.com
Subject: URGENT APPEAL - MOZAMBIQUE (Steam In Action Appeal)
For The Attention of Mr. Adelino Mesquita

Dear Sir

I saw this appeal from Steam In Action and although I cannot assist with regard to photographs of Mozambiquean locomotives, I thought you might be interested in the attached list.

This is a list of all the railway vehicles delivered to Mozambique by the British Company – D Wickham & Co. Ltd of Ware, Hertfordshire. The list was compiled by Mr Keith Gunner who is the co-author of the Wickham Works List, a full list of the railway vehicles manufactured by the Company.
This company specialised in trolleys, inspections cars, Rail buses etc. and as you will see supplied numerous vehicles to various companies with rail interests, from the early 1930's until the late 1980's.

I hope you will find this list interesting and should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Jonathan Flood
Owner & Moderator – Wickham of Ware Yahoo! Group
http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/WickhamofWare"

Click here to view PDF.

Update on Millsite

The future of Millsite was debated during an important meeting between HRASA and Transnet on 26th May.

At the time of going to press we have not yet had a report on the outcome of that meeting.

MEMBERS COMMENT

"Just a thought not a moan. A number of Millsite National collection locos are destined for safekeeping at Sandstone which I know will give them a secure future. However it looks like it will restrict access/viewing of these historic locos by the general public/enthusiast fraternity. I've heard of at least 2 events this year that have been by invite only [the overseas dignitaries and Easter]. Surely the wider public deserve access to such items.
Regards,
P J Odell"

SIA COMMENT

The Sandstone Heritage Trust's offer to move 7 locomotives by road from Millsite to Sandstone for safekeeping was never accepted by Transnet and has lapsed. A revised quotation from the road contractor reveals that the costs have risen by nearly 50% since the Millsite crisis flared up. Mike Myers of Sandstone has replied to Peter Odell saying that he agrees that there is insufficient visitor numbers to Sandstone to justify adding these items to the inventory.

HRASA

Comments by Chris Janisch, an Advisory Board member, on our relationship with HRASA.

"There has recently been a lot of speculation as to who exactly should be dealing with industry-associated authorities like Transnet. Each viewpoint has its merits, but at the end of the day it makes little sense to have anything other than a single representative body doing the work. Split views tend to reduce the impact of the message we are trying to get across, and also render it difficult for the authority to find a consistent outlet for its decisions. It is vital that we all find common ground and use the force of numbers to effect. Of course, this is easier said than done. Heritage railway bodies and individuals are notorious for their politics and infighting. It is one of the major reasons why we are in the position we find ourselves today.

Is it possible to put aside personal jealousies and conflict, and rise above them to make a success of our fragile industry? The answer is of course yes - but it will require the buy-in of all players, as well as their active support. It is time to put unjust criticisms aside and move forward. Whilst they were formed for different purposes and serve different interests, SIA and HRASA should be working together as one, speaking from the same sheet and aiding each other as necessary. They should work together on preservation and tourism matters in the interests of heritage rail. This co-operation will need acceptance, and then discussion as to how exactly it will work.

HRASA is the formal, recognized and representative mandated body of the industry. SIA has the financial support, energy and flair to get things done. Together we could make a great team."

SIA COMMENT

We have received an unconfirmed report that HRASA is discussing the scrapping of all the Millsite cranes with the exception of ten. Apparently the rationale will be to raise funds to save the ten. This is entirely unacceptable to SIA who have clearly documented a plan to save all the locomotives.

HRASA and Transnet should review the experience of Barry Scrap Yard in Wales before they cut up a single Heritage locomotive. We hope to receive verification of this point shortly, at which point we invite SIA members to make known their thoughts and comments directly to HRASA.

HRASA Activity Report Public Release

HRASA have provided SIA with the following Activity Report which they have asked us to publish to all our members. Click here to view PDF.

Active Projects to Save Locomotives

We have had some interesting news this month.

Sheltam have recently sold their two steam locomotives. Class 12R 1510 and 19A 691 have been purchased by Oscar (Dr. Richard Sabatini).

His intention is to provide both locomotives to the Elgin Valley Railway based at Elgin Station. There are currently no active 12R's nor 19A's in South Africa. Both locomotives are ideally suited for operating on the 1:40 gradient line between Elgin and Botriver.

Elgin Valley Railway have also decided to dispose of their motor rail trolleys. If anyone is interested in these they can contact Dylan Knott at Dylan.knott@hvrmanagement.co.za.

Emergency Appeal

Ashley Peter of Umgeni Steam Railway sent us an outstanding summary of the history of the Hilton Railway Museum right up to the current impasse which requires serious attention.

HILTON, NATAL RAILWAY MUSEUM & UMGENI STEAM RAILWAY

The background to the railway preservation efforts at Hilton date back to about 1986, when Umgeni Steam Railway was still a fledgling preservation group - only four years old and already desperately challenged for space.

Not that this prevented enthusiastic members from trying to save all historic railway rolling stock that was in danger of being scrapped. Even the Railway Society of Southern Africa (Natal Branch), parent body of USR, got into the act and approached South African Transport Services for the donation some very historic and typically Natal locomotives – namely examples of Classes H2, 1 and S2 – all of which were staged out of use at Mason's Mill, Pietermaritzburg.

Much to everyone's surprise, the application was successful – and even more amazing – SATS agreed to haul these locos to a destination chosen by the RSSA, either free of charge, or for a very nominal fee – I can't recall exactly which. This led to an interesting – and frustrating – quandary. Where to store and preserve these locos, two of which dated back to Natal Government Railways days? USR, being the established standard gauge preservation group in Natal, was asked to take over responsibility for the locos.

However, at that point USR was restricted to a relatively small corner of the still operational Umgeni Power Station at New Germany, outside Durban. This presented problems as any additional rolling stock would have placed the admittedly sympathetic power station management in a rather embarrassing position.

In desperation USR and RSSA members began searching for alternative preservation sites. One was found at Tanker Services in Mobeni, Durban but this consisted of a single short siding, which accommodated only a few coaches with limited opportunities to perform preservation work. By comparison, when Hilton outside Pietermaritzburg was identified as an additional depot, this appeared to be the solution to many of USR's problems. The donated locos were immediately relocated to Hilton and so USR's “Midlands” depot was established.

Things went from strength to strength for a while, with a vibrant restoration and preservation operation run by an enthusiastic number of USR members resident in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas.

Soon 3778, the S2, was operational and short public trips were run down to the level crossing at Boshoff Road. Gradually, as other larger locos were returned to steam, these trips were extended, first to Cedara, then Howick and later on to Balgowan. Locos of classes 19AR, 19D, 15AR and even 15F were regularly to be seen out on the Natal Main Line.

There was a healthy interchange of Durban and Pietermaritzburg members, with representatives from both depots teaming up to make USR operations successful.

Unfortunately, this seemingly idyllic situation was not to last. A large-scale “changing of the guard” amongst the membership at Hilton occurred. Many of the previous fiercely loyal USR members left the scene – some passed away whilst others moved out of the area. The 'new order' that became established at Hilton regrettably included an increasing number of people who seemed to have their own agenda – and this revolved largely around complete autonomy for the Hilton operation – a sort of “unilateral declaration of independence” was eventually declared, with the name of the splinter group being changed without consultation to “Natal Railway Museum”. Yes, there was a transitional period when the slogan “Natal Railway Museum, the Midlands home of Umgeni Steam Railway” was punted in an apparently reconciliatory approach, but eventually this too was dropped and the breakaway become complete. Following these developments, railway preservation and operations at Hilton slowly, but surely, degenerated.

In the meantime, USR had managed to secure the infinitely larger and more suitable (from a preservation perspective) old steam locomotive depot at Mason's Mill – ironically the same depot from which most of USR's locos at Hilton had originally emanated.

External circumstances had also been changing. Firstly, Spoornet's “Steam Exit Plan” had been enforced on preservation groups around the country. This spelt problems for future viable operations at Hilton as much of the required infrastructure needed to comply with the new Spoornet requirements, not least of all being proper inspection pits, did not exist.

Furthermore, the once reasonably secure workshop, stores and loco staging areas originally established by USR in the “Quarry Sidings” at Hilton were lost to property developers. This meant that all of this equipment had to be moved en masse to the unfenced station area, which was largely open to the public and other elements.

It was later discovered that in a desperate effort to raise further funds to cover subsequent costs, including his own salary, the then curator of NRM (this being a paid position at that time) embarked on an utterly thoughtless scrapping exercise, disposing with wild abandon of tons of priceless and virtually irreplaceable spares and rolling stock. Perhaps one of the most notable victims of this ruthless campaign was a four-wheeled DE goods wagon which was summarily cut up despite the fact that its purchase and refurbishment (in 3CR12 steel, no less!) had been privately funded some years earlier by one of the original and long-standing USR Hilton members.

Some time later USR thought that there had finally been a move towards sanity when some of the NRM membership began making overtures for differences to be settled and called for a new spirit of co-operation. But no sooner had USR rather naively settled outstanding debts in the region of one hundred thousand rand run up by NRM at Hilton, than the schism between the two groups was resumed, with renewed vigour – the plea for closer co-operation evidently only a devious ploy to gain access to scarce USR funds...

USR consequently made a decision to move most of its remaining rolling stock from Hilton to Mason's Mill, where all the necessary facilities were already in place. Spoornet was approached for assistance with this and they responded favourably with a quote of just R4 500 for the use of a Class 5E1 electric unit and crew for a day. Plans were thus set in place for the move.

However, upon hearing of the impending move, the NRM contingent adopted a two-pronged approach to counter this. Firstly they gave assurances to all and sundry that they intended to transform Hilton back into an active preservation centre, providing all the necessary infrastructure to restore, preserve and operate the historic railway equipment in their care. Then they followed this up with a thinly-veiled threat of legal action should there be an attempt made to move even one vehicle at Hilton, irrespective of whom it belonged to.

Still hoping that some kind of resolution was possible and perhaps foolishly believing that NRM could actually restore and operate some of the items entrusted to it, USR reluctantly decided to back down in its efforts to recover the rolling stock, no doubt hoping that NRM members would eventually see reason and agree to the move to Mason's Mill, but this was not to be.

With the branch line from Cedara to Hilton falling into disuse – Spoornet no longer accepting timber traffic from Hilton – the infrastructure began disintegrating. This was actually part of the original Natal Old Main Line, but the section beyond Hilton, to Boughton, was closed following extensive flood damage in 1987. First the overhead electrical equipment began disappearing thanks to copper theft, so virtually the whole lot was finally removed to make it safe. Next, wooden sleepers were stolen, probably due to the growing demand for hardwood by furniture manufacturers etc. Both the former USR operating routes between Hilton and Cedara, as well as from Merrivale to Howick were affected. At latest count, the Hilton branch had lost in excess of 500 sleepers and there are claims that metal fastenings and rails have also been removed.

This brings us to the current situation at Hilton, with the remaining rolling stock, much of it of significant historical importance, sadly deteriorated due to years of neglect - well and truly stranded as a result of both logistical and financial reasons. What with none of the promised infrastructure development; restoration or preservation having materialised at Hilton, the erstwhile vociferous proponents of NRM have seemingly faded into oblivion, leaving the collection of locos, wagons and other items to its fate. Furthermore, there is now even less motivation for Hilton to be resuscitated as a preservation depot, seeing as Transnet Freight Rail has banned the operation of steam trains on the Natal Main Line entirely.

At least responsibility for the extensive collection of donated railwayana in the station building appears to have been taken over by the new tenants who run a garden shop and nursery on the premises, but one wonders what may happen should they depart the scene – their lease with Transnet Property Services reportedly being far from secure.

Seeing as NRM was, by its own admission, unable to cover the costs of securing the rolling stock at Hilton station, concern was raised about the safety of valuable fittings still on the locomotives. HRASA was approached, as some of the locos are THF property, and permission was obtained for USR to remove copper and brass components for safekeeping and hopefully to assist future preservation actions. The Secretary of NRM, about the only remaining member still in evidence, has raised concern about these activities, commenting publicly that the amount of effort expended in removing said equipment (in effect half a dozen USR members spending two Saturday mornings on site) would have been sufficient to restore at least one of these engines to steam.

Perhaps this misguided remark sums up NRM's ignorance of what is actually required in terms of restoring steam locomotives (and other railway equipment) and maintaining them in operating condition, considering that most of these locos have been out of use for ten years or more – and that is exactly how they have ended up in the predicament they are now in...











Feedback: Funding and Saving Venerable Old Steam Cranes

We have had a wonderful response from members as always. Various members have offered funds which will be gratefully received. The discussion with the authorities and with the scrap industry is extremely delicate because no one will own up to anything at this point. We will keep members informed.

In the meantime the money which has been pledged will be kept in a separate account earning interest. Money has been pledged for Millsite and indeed for the De Aar crane. It will be SIA's job to allocate the funding on the basis of what they consider to be the highest priority. Obviously SIA members can specify specifically how their money should be spent or, which is more often the case, they simply ask SIA to use the money to save locomotives.

Members who have made financial contributions to Steam in Action should rest assured that the money is safe, earning interest, and represents a very powerful war chest against the time when we are comfortable that we have a situation which requires immediate funding.

In the meantime we will pursue every possible avenue to persuade the authorities that much of what SIA does is in fact something that is the responsibility of the National Heritage Authorities and although the private sector will definitely play its part we need to see commitment from them as well.

VERY OLD STEAM CRANE LOCATED IN BLOEMFONTEIN

Talking about saving venerable Steam cranes, SIA members have found an equally impressive and much older crane which was buried and lost and forgotten in a Blue Gum plantation. Here it is.








The good news is it has now been safely moved to the Bloemfontein Loco Depot which is under the supervision of the Sandstone Heritage Trust and plans are currently being discussed to restore it. We receive the assistance of a number of volunteers and we would like to thank them for their valuable assistance. Details of the crane are as follows:

Manufacturer: Crafton Cranes Engineers, Bedford
Manufacturer Number: 2812
Model: 912E
S.A.R. Number: 187
10 ton steam driven crane.
Condition: Poor.

We will obviously update members as we go along. The budget to restore this crane is currently being prepared.

Update on Kimberley Story

Oscar Sabatini has agreed to take on this project and he will be pursuing it.

"From: Mike Myers [mailto:mikem@sandstone.co.za]
Sent: 20 May 2009 12:41 PM
To: Susie.Mabie@transnet.net
Subject: Steam Cranes
Importance: High

Dear Susie,

I am receiving requests for clarification from a number of people regarding the two cranes that were cut up, apparently in error, in Kimberly. The tender for the Kimberly cranes was issued sometime ago on tender number 1190 72805 and we wrote a letter, attached, requesting that a crane be donated for preservation.

A stay on awarding the tender was arranged by HRASA but while the request to extend the closing date was in the process (see the attached), apparently so that Transnet could look at the request for a donation, Sandstone was alerted to the fact that the cranes were being cut up. Transnet was contacted and responded that this was not possible as the tender had not been awarded. Further calls however confirmed that this was indeed the case.

Below is an extract of an e-mail received from Mark Robinson on the subject.

"Firstly, in case you are not aware of the events that took place at Kimberley, the scrap merchants who had already finished cutting their allocation of locos, convinced someone in the shed staff that they had been awarded the tender for the two steam cranes and had them moved to the cutting area and proceeded to (very quickly) cut them. Whether they did this because they were aware that a "preservation order" had been put on them or not is open to debate, but certainly we have our suspicions. Reclaim were the highest tenderer for these items, but Transnet had issued a notice to all tenderers asking them to hold their tenders in force until the 30th November, to give time for discussion and assessment of SAHRA's requirements. It is our view that Transnet is going to try to limit the impact on their money-making scrap deal by appealing at least part of the "preservation order", but HRASA will continue to work closely with SAHRA on behalf of its members to see to limit the impact of this."

We have been asking for sometime how this was resolved but we have yet to receive a response. The e-mail attached to Willem Grobelaar is just one of numerous requests for clarification as to what was happening. At a point in time the remains of the cranes were still on site but we have recently been advised that the cranes have now totally disappeared. We are not sure who was responsible for cutting up the Kimberly cranes, a company from the Cape has been mentioned, but it appears that they may have won out in the end. If it the same company that cut up the cranes in the first place that has now removed the scrap then this is a real travesty of justice.

We were recently, per a working agreement with Reclam, offered a crane that they had won on tender which is standing in De Aar at a price of R 210 000.00. What we would have liked to suggest to Transnet is that the scrap at Kimberly be swopped for the crane that Reclam is offering us but this won't happen because there is nothing to swop. The idea is that Transnet would have given Reclam the scrap in lieu of the De Aar crane and then would have donated the De Aar crane for heritage preservation. As it stands we have asked the entire SIA membership if they would like to make donations to buy the crane but with the amount Reclam are wanting and the fact that we only have three weeks to come up with the funds it is unlikely that we would be in a position to save it.

Sandstone recently put in a bid for a crane at Daanskraal to ensure that at least one crane would survive for preservation. It was awarded the crane but it seems pointless anyone should be spending money on an item which is part of South Africa's heritage when these funds could be used more productively to restore items. Sandstone is certainly not in a position to buy the Reclam crane having just laid out a lot of money for the NG wagons we recently acquired on tender in PE and the crane in Daanskraal.

Can I ask you to look into this for us please so that I can give a definitive answer to all of those people who are contacting me?

Kind regards,
Michael C. Myers"

Click here to view PDF of Transnet's Letter Click here to view PDF of Sandstone's Letter Click here to view PDF of Sandstone's Email

Saving Locomotives - A Dilemma

Jan Kemdorp locomotives. We have now had confirmation from the Defence Force that they wish the locomotives to be moved because they are in the way.

We have put the matter to the Transnet Heritage Foundation but they have sadly not responded.

The Importance of Positive Media Coverage

This month we make an appeal to our SIA members to engage more with the media. So many of our members have got outstanding photographs and a lot of knowledge with respect to various aspects of Southern Africa's Railway Heritage. This was proven rather dramatically by the excellent response we received from members concerning Mozambique and what used to be there and what has survived etc.

Have you considered making an approach to a media organisation in your area who might wish to take up the story? SIA has in mind to do a formal press release early in June, which you can ensure reaches your local media. It will paint a picture of a situation which is finely balanced between making real progress or slipping further back into disarray. The idea is that each member would forward the press release to known media organisations in his or her particular area.

Archive Update: Breakdown Cranes

John Batwell has received information from Chris Capewell. Chris, thank you for this invaluable contribution to our archives.

We know many of our members will find this information most useful.

Click here to view PDF of South Africa SAR SATS

Click here to view PDF of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

Regional News

Reefsteamers Germiston



Lee Gates of Reefsteamers has supplied this wonderful little slide show entitled 12AR Morning Shunting. He made the point that it is wonderful to be a person standing amidst that steam and having the satisfaction of knowing you are a part of a team that did something constructive and that you personally worked on or helped repair or restore the locomotives and coaches.

To join Reefsteamers contact Michael Thiel, Membership Liaison, at membership@reefsteamers.co.za for details.

Click here to view PDF

Friends of the Rail

May has been another busy month for FOTR.

Very busy trains ran to Cullinan to celebrate the Cullifest and Mothers' Day. They were both hauled by our new pet, Class 15F 3117. This engine has so far proven to be a good 'un and handles any load with ease. The coming weekend will see another train to Cullinan, followed by our usual winter photogala. These events promise to unleash some stunning photographs, which will be seen next month.

We were visited by Geoff Cooke and some of his tour group, who also rode our 2 May train to Cullinan. They were very impressed with our 15F, which performed a trip around the depot for them.

In our efforts to relocate to Hermanstad, we made a big cleanup push over the weekend 23-24 May. The stores at Capital Park were cleaned out and much heavy equipment relocated to the new site. Our old base is looking much neater now and further work is planned. At Hermanstad, small but necessary work is being done, and we continue to source materials for further tracklaying.

Our coaches have seen constant attention, and our handyman Steve Smith has finally completed the installation of a PA system. This will improve our communications with passengers greatly, and add the professional touch. The next project is the fitment of a generator, which should be done quite soon. Our 19D 2650 is in for some element repairs but is expected back in June, while the 24 class will steam for the last time this weekend before withdrawal for motion repairs. Parts have been obtained and it is just a case of doing the work!













RSSA Natal

RSSA Natal has supplied us with the following update.

Click here to view PDF

Alwyn Vintcent Steam Tug - Cape Town

No further news regarding the vessel. The owner in Australia made contact on 6th May via e-mail but no plans have been disclosed as to when the vessel will be exported.

Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe

Decision time for the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe.

"Back in August 2006 the Western Cape Garden Route was ravaged by storms resulting in severe flooding. Particularly hard hit was the heritage steam railway line between George and Knysna known as the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe. The line was first opened to traffic in 1928, and when built was regarded as one of the most expensive sections of line in the world, because of the difficult terrain it followed and the many civil projects that needed to be constructed. Today it is rated as one of the most spectacularly scenic railways in the world and a tourism icon. Historically the line was declared a preserved railway in 1992 and officially handed over to the Transnet Heritage Foundation in 1993.Since that time the line has become the only scheduled steam hauled passenger service in the world.

Tragically the flooding caused by the August 2006 storms resulted in severe damage to the railway infrastructure resulting in the closure of the line. Damage runs into tens of millions of Rands, with major construction work required to repair the many landslides along the line and in some places the construction of culverts and new bridges. The damage at the Kaaimans pass is particularly problematic and may not be feasible to repair.

From the onset it was evident that Transnet would be reluctant to re-open the line. The line had been operating at a loss for sometime despite carrying 115000 passengers in its last full year of operation, Transnet was obliged to subsidise operations to the tune of R10m per annum. A Spoornet risk assessment carried out in 2007 concluded that R120m would be required to restore the line and recommended the line be closed. This together with Transnet's stated policy to focus on its core business of freight transport and associated operations and to divest itself of non-core assets did not auger well for the future of the heritage line.

Meanwhile as a temporary measure Transnet was persuaded to operate the Choo-Tjoe service between George and Hartenbos from April 2007, which was extended to Mossel Bay in September 2007. This line is also under threat of imminent closure as operations are again being subsidized by Transnet at the rate of R850,000 per month.

Soon after the closure of the line in August 2006, Garden Route tourism bodies, Municipalities and businesses affected by the closure came together to form an action group. The principal objective of this group was to lobby provincial government to intervene with government and Transnet, with a plan to re-open the line based on its value to Tourism using a public-private partnership model. This was embraced by the Western Cape Government in December 2006, who accepted the challenge to save the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe on the George-Knysna line.

During 2007 the Department of Economic Development and Tourism within the WC Provincial Government put together a team to investigate the viability of re-opening the Heritage line along with a number of other alternatives. It was during this period that Knysna formed its own Choo-Tjoe Action Group under the auspices of the Knysna Mayor, with full commitment from the Knysna Municipality Council. Alan McVitty a local business man was very much the driving force behind the initiative, and a principal architect of the so called 'Knysna Business Plan'. The plan calls for the establishment of a public-private partnership that would operate an enhanced steam hauled set of products that would be profitable whilst creating jobs and facilitating community tourism along the railway. The plan is pragmatic and envisages re-opening the Knysna-Wilderness section of the Heritage Line only in a phased plan. This approach has been adopted as it is generally recognized that the damage around the Kaaimans pass is severe and would be costly to repair.

By the end of 2007 it was apparent to the Knysna action group that the team from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism investigating the viability of re-opening the Heritage line would not be recommending the re-opening of the line, and instead would support the continued operation of the George-Mossel Bay line. Inevitably the Knysna action group took issue with this stance and called for an independent assessment of the viability of both lines. As a result the Western Cape MEC for Tourism Lynn Brown undertook, with endorsement from Transnet, to appoint an independent project manager to assess the 2 business cases to privatise the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe.

Following this pronouncement Arcus Gibb & Grant Thornton were appointed by provincial government to undertake the assessments. Their report entitled 'Feasibility Study for the future viability of the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe' was finally handed to the MEC on March 17th 2009. The MEC has gone on record recently to confirm that a tender or Request for Interest would be issued shortly to allow private sector investment and operation on either of the two possible lines: George-Knysna and George –Mossel Bay.

As a result the Knysna action group is once again in action to mobilize resources to respond to the impending tender. Whilst we are realistic about the challenges facing us, particularly the financial investment required, we now do have an opportunity to put together a consortium that has the necessary financial backing and operating experience which would once again see the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe restored to its former glory.

Mike Griffiths, Knysna Action Group"

Political Developments
Regarding the Western Cape leadership, SIA will be aware that the DA have taken over. The outgoing MEC for Economic Development and Tourism (who have been driving the Choo-Tjoe process) is Garth Strachen. He is pro getting the Choo-Tjoe back. Garth is succeeded by Alan Winde (DA) who is also pro the Choo-Tjoe.

SANRASM

This link says it all: http://www.allatsea.co.za/trains/sanrasmsouth.htm.

The Apple Express, Port Elizabeth

PORT ELIZABETH APPLE EXPRESS
(Association Incorporated under Section 21 Reg.No. 2003 / 005 178 / 08)

26 May, 2009
BOOKINGS: bookings@appleexpresstrain.co.za
ALL INFORMATION & BOOKINGS ARRANGED THROUGH:
Central Booking office: SUMMERSTRAND PORT ELIZABETH : Ph. & Fx: 041 583 4480.
RUNNING SCHEDULE:- www.appleexpresstrain.co.za

Herewith a report on our recent Geoff Cook Tour 10th. to 14th. May 2009.

This year we ran a mixed goods / passenger train at the request of Geoff Cook. Leaving Port Elizabeth Humewood Road station at 07h.30 behind our newly restored NG 15 No.119 [Henschel 1938]. The day was bright and clear, cool and still, we ran out to Chelsea junction (22km.) with photo run by's set up. Then on to Van Stadens (43km.) for the first service stop and the passengers walking on down to the Gorge Bridge for the customary photo run by. Onwards past Thornhill to Sumit (59km.) for the spectacular run winding down, of 12km. to Loerie (72km.) for the lunch and service stopover.

After that stop is was on to Gamtoos junction (81km.) for a run over the Gamtoos river bridge then back to the junction and on along the river bank section through Togo and Bodker to Hankey running on the Patensie for the overnight. Passengers retiring to their accommodation at various B & B's in and around town, while the locomotive's fire etc. and recoaling the tender was looked after by the night crew.

The second day saw the return to Gamtoos junction with a slight problem opposite the Patensie Prison with grass on the track, having been crushed the day before, now with dew as well as the grass juice we had serious wheel slip for a while, then on to the main line through Humansdorp (113km.) for a lunch and service stop. The photographers were again blessed with a clear fine day for the run by's. The arrival at Assegaaibosch (163km.) was late, just after dark.

The third day was a difference, the passenger coaches were left behind while 119 coupled up to the mix of goods trucks B, DZ's, Box cars etc. and the only remaining TZ Cool Truck, with our guards van, now converted for wheel chair disabled passengers and newly painted in the old maroon and grey. Here most of the Group chose to ride in the van back to Humansdorp (50km.) with numerous photo run by's on the way, while a few choose to take the road route and line-side photo.

Here at Humansdorp Geoff Cook's Group left us to travel on down to George. The return trip was manned by the out-coming road group back to Humansdorp for the night.

Now with the fourth day, due to the grass problem on the Patensie line it was decided that we would not return the train to Patensie, rather stop over at Loerie, while the passengers and crew were bussed back to the accommodation at Patensie.

With the last day ahead it was a later start from Loerie, with the magnificent climb over 12km. from Loerie (30m.) to Sumit (228m.) 119 ran well all the way back to Port Elizabeth. All in all a wonderful trip. Where on earth can one now have a trip covering 486km. on 2ft. N G. with Assegaaibosch being 100 miles at the end of the main line.

The line from Assegaaibosch has been closed for the past two years due to sections of flood damage late in 2007, although the first flood section between Jaggersbos and Kompanjiesdrif was crossed by an inspecting NG 91 who managed to run all the way to Louterwater. However Transnet will not consider any repairs here, estimating the cost to be R 500 000.00. [Locals feel that the job could be completed for about R20 000.00.] The Patensie branch had also been closed as there is no traffic available from this branch, with all the citrus traffic now on road, and only opened at the last moment for this trip.

A road race was undertaken last Wednesday all the way up to Avontuur which was very interesting. There being two further flood damage points just above Louterwater and closer to Avontuur.

Avontuur Line, Eastern Cape

The Sandstone Heritage Trust has been struggling to locate, save and move 114 Narrow Gauge wagons that they purchased on a scrap tender.

18 cannot be accounted for and another 40-50 have been vandalised to the point where they are of no value. However, a team is currently on site removing whatever components can be saved.

Due to the exceptionally high cost of moving them by road recommendation has been made that they be moved to Assegaaibos for immediate to long-term storage. The following document was sent out on 13th May to all relevant officials, so far without a response.

"From: Mike Myers [mailto:mikem@sandstone.co.za]
Sent: 13 May 2009 08:23 AM
To: vuyokahla@transnet.net; Debbie.vanderWalt@transnet.net
Subject: Don't let Assegaaibos, a National NG treasure go the way of Port Shepstone or Humewood road.

Dear Vuyo,

The Sandstone Heritage Trust has been submitting tenders for Narrow Gauge freight wagons as well as negotiating with the scrap industry to acquire select numbers of additional wagons in order to preserve them. Because we do not the opportunity to operate a freight service on the Narrow Gauge ourselves we are taking a very long-term view of the potential of Narrow Gauge, particularly from a tourist standpoint.

We are currently in a position where we have in excess of 100 Narrow Gauge wagons scattered between Port Elizabeth and Avontuur. We have been negotiating for some time now to receive preferential treatment from Transnet to move these items to the Eastern Free State. The cost by road is prohibitive and a rough estimate is it would cost us R2 million to move them by road and will take nearly 8-months to complete the assignment. Even if we moved them to the Eastern Free State we have no particular application for them since they are all virtually duplicates of what we already have in stock.

We have always had high hopes that the majestic Port Elizabeth to Avontuur railway would enter the limelight as a significant 2-ft Narrow Gauge destination for International Tourism. In this regard we have submitted many proposals including the offer of funding. One of these proposals related to the leasing of the facilities at Assegaaibos and the placing of a number of Garratt NGG16 and NG15 locomotives at this depot so that they could operate trains in both directions out of Assegaaibos. This proposal appears not to have received a favourable reception from Transnet, the Eastern Cape provincial government, the Madiba Bay Development Corporation, or the Apple Express and we have had to accept that an operator of steam locomotives is not welcome on the line. We do however understand that there is a major restoration project underway for a number of Steam locomotives to operate out of Port Elizabeth which we applaud. We would however mention that the line is so long that it is probably not feasible to operate excursions from Assegaaibos to Avontuur from locomotives staged in Port Elizabeth.



Humewood Road



Port Shepstone

Because our primary application to use the facilities at Assegaaibos weren't successful we are now renewing an application to please allow us to place 120 Narrow Gauge wagons, all of which are in good roadworthy condition, at Assegaaibos pending our decision as to what to do with them. We would work with Transnet's Narrow Gauge department in Port Elizabeth to move these wagons to Assegaaibos where our team would decommission them. It would be necessary to remove the bearings because these will almost inevitably be stolen in short order but they will be stored safely nearby so that when the wagons need to be moved, once a decision is made regarding their future, this can be done quickly and efficiently.

It is possible that we would like to employ one person who would be resident at Assegaaibos to care for these wagons.

There is significant demand for NG freight train tourist photography and in this regard the Sandstone Heritage Trust and our 2-ft Narrow Gauge railway in the Eastern Free State could be considered as specialists. Not only do we have a wide variety of wagons but we have them in sufficient quantities to make up single type wagon consists, which are popular.

We commend the Authorities and the Tourist community in Port Elizabeth particularly to consider these matters. One of the most attractive configurations for tourists and steam photographers is the mixed passenger/goods train which was quite common on South Africa's rural Narrow Gauge lines in days gone by. However, if the current programme of cutting up virtually all of South Africa's Narrow Gauge freight rail stock continues there will be nothing left with which to configure such attractive consists.

One of our dilemmas is we do not know who is in charge of the development plan for the Avontuur Line and therefore we are distributing this document widely in the hope that we may receive a favourable response from someone in authority who will allow us to keep our wagons in Assegaaibos. If the application is declined then we will rationalize those few that we think are particularly rare and it is conceivable that we will have to sell the balance back to the scrap dealers due to the huge transportation costs involved, which greatly exceed the financial value of the assets in question. Of course from a preservation or long-term Heritage Tourism standpoint it is hard to quantify their value.

Yours sincerely,

Michael C. Myers"

However, one of our Advisory Board members has commented as follows:

"This is a dilemma. I cannot understand the reluctance of the various layers of authority to developing the narrow gauge railway network for tourism purposes. As you know it is a real money spinner in Wales and elsewhere where the trains are operated including job creation for restoration and ongoing maintenance/support services. Is this an angle that can be developed further?

Are there any other options to move the stored wagons to a common holding point for secure keeping? Given the low level of freight activity on the national rail network some sort of deal to move the wagons in a phased stream might have developed useful revenue and PR.

To me it looks as if a major strategic error is being made to effectively turn away from the retention and recommissioning of the lines mentioned. This is short term expediency at the expense of long term benefit to the local and national economy.

Phil Mortimer Snr (UK)"

Zimbabwe

We were astonished to find that during May Zimbabwe issued an announcement that they were gearing up a rail response to the World Cup 2010 opportunity.

The point has been made many times that South Africa, the country hosting the event, does not seem to have sparked on this one.
Here is the press release:

"From Chronicle 6th May 2009

NRZ embarks on refurbishing exercise

Business Reporter

THE National Railways of Zimbabwe has embarked on a refurbishment exercise of its trains as part of the 2010 World Cup preparations to be held in South Africa, an official has said.

In an interview, NRZ public relations manager Mr. Fanuel Masikati said the refurbishment exercise was being done on steam locomotives and the museum coaches.

"As the country's major transporter we have also come up with various strategies earmarked to market the tourism sector in 2010," he said.

He said 2010 World Cup was a platform for the country to realise an influx of tourists visiting resort centres in the country. Mr. Masikati said it was imperative for NRZ to ensure that it improved service delivery.

"As the World Cup roars into life in South Africa, there will be an influx of tourists visiting resort centres in the country. NRZ, as the major transporter in the country, is geared to promote the country's tourism sector. For that reason, we will ensure that our trains are in a condition to transport visitors to various destinations," he said.

He said NRZ was earmarking to refurbish 10 steam locomotives. The steam locomotives, Mr. Masikati said, would be used to haul safari trains.
"We are targeting to refurbish 10 locomotives and so far we have achieved five. We are also optimistic that by the time the World Cup kicks off, the programme will be complete," he said.

Some of the steam engines repaired were at the moment being used for shunt operations.

He added that NRZ had already refurbished museum coaches that would be used as safari trains. He also said as part of the World Cup preparations plans were already at an advanced stage to procure passenger trains from China. As part of marketing the tourism sector, they would also ensure that international trains continue servicing routes such as the Bulawayo-Francistown.

NRZ has embarked on a railway infrastructure rehabilitation programme to improve service delivery. The programme involves among other issues repairing railway lines and setting up of centralised train control system. Mr. Masikati also appealed to members of the public to desist from vandalising NRZ equipment adding that such acts of sabotage adversely impacted the parastatal's service delivery."

Talking about Zimbabwe, we have had previous contact with them and have recently sent a wake-up call to Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, as below.

"From: Joanne West [mailto:joannewest@btinternet.com]
Sent: 21 May 2009 11:40
To: Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai

Dear Mr. Tsvangirai,

You certainly have a tough job on your hands and we wish you well. The attached letter was sent to the President of Zimbabwe some time ago but we never received a reply.

Since this letter was written a new organisation, Steam in Action (www.steam-in-action.com), has come into being and we invite a dialogue with you. This is a support group which is committed to improving opportunities for Rail Tourism in Southern Africa. The tourist sector is a major income generator and sadly over the last 15-years Rail Tourism, and particularly Heritage Tourism involving charismatic steam engines, has been allowed to dissipate to almost nothing throughout the region. Zimbabwe is famous for its Garratts and for the valiant way in which it has kept its steam workshops and facilities operating in Bulawayo.

We have taken the liberty of attaching our correspondence with Mozambique so you can see how well focused they are on the development of their Rail Tourism industry.

We look forward to hearing from yourself or possibly the Minister of Tourism at your earliest convenience."

Angola

Large numbers of locomotives threatened. We invite our members to comment urgently.

"From: Henry Posner III [mailto:HPosneriii@rrdc.com]
Sent: 12 May 2009 18:23
To: Joanne West; Paul Ash
Cc: markwmhemphill@yahoo.com; Henry Posner III
Subject: Angola

Mark, I am sharing these with the 2 folks most likely to know about the locos and whether any are worth saving, for a reaction.

From: Mark W. Hemphill [mailto:markwmhemphill@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 10, 2009 11:37 AM
To: Henry Posner III
Subject: Angola

Henry, any thoughts about these locomotives? Any prospects for a tourist railway in Angola that was steam powered?

Mark W. Hemphill
1-503-449-7258 cell

markwmhemphill@yahoo.com

----- Forwarded Message ----
From: Mark Burr <mark.burr1@gmail.com>
To: Ernst T Pringle <epringle@iafrica.com>; markwmhemphill@yahoo.com
Sent: Sunday, May 10, 2009 2:22:21 AM
Subject: FW: Trains
ET, the one person I can think of who could answer this is Mark Hemphill aka "Railway Mark" from Iraq!

Mark, you will remember ET from Aegis-Basra: Echo One team leader. Take a look at attached photos from Angola. MB

From: Ernst Pringle (ET) [mailto:epringle@iafrica.com]
Sent: Friday, May 08, 2009 1:48 PM
To: mark.burr1@gmail.com
Subject: Trains

Hi. Mark

I have found about 150 old locomotives (Pre 1970) in Angola currently looking to cut them UP and sell as scrap.

Do you think we can get them sold they have been looted badly but there is a lot of the same ones?

ERNST PRINGLE (ET)"

A number of SIA members have inspected these locos which are in various locations and generally they are in a pitiful condition.





Member's Feedback

Memories

"Dear all
I'm a fan of SA steam, having had several holidays through Railway Touring Company (UK) both on Union Ltd, and Rovos Rail. I joined SIA as a supporter at the start.
On one of our trips in 2006, we visited Bloemfontein depot, met Lukas Nel and saw the THF locos in the shed that he was keeping a fatherly eye on. These included the 16E, 23 and the twin exhaust 25NC.Can anyone give a current state of these locos as when I saw them they appeared in quite good condition - probably better than your Millsite locos?

I realise that in 3years anything could have happened to them. I have very happy memories of them from a RTC-Union Ltd tour we had in 1999, when Ian Pretorius was train manager and we used about 20 locos over some 3000km, including trips over Montague with GL and 19D, Motkop over the reverses, Caledon over Sir Lowry with GO and GF double heading, Wolsey with 2x19D's, a cracking run from Kimberley-De Aar with Red Devil, and 16E+15DA Bloemfontein to Kimberley. There were several other sections with 23, 25NC, 24.

Great memories - wish could happen today!!

Keep up the good work"

SIA COMMENT Mike, things are happening on the Rail Tourism side quicker than you think. Maybe you should start shopping around for the best airline ticket you can arrange for 2010. As far as the Bloemfontein locos are concerned they are safe. They are currently guarded by a security firm which guards the old Steam Sheds at Bloemfontein currently occupied by the Sandstone Heritage Trust.

Facebook

"I'm a 22 year-old steam enthusiast from Cape Town. You must be aware of Facebook, have you ever considered a Facebook group for Steam-In-Action? I think it might be an excellent way of gaining new members and support, worldwide.

Keep up the good work!"

SIA COMMENT We believe this is an excellent idea because it will be of particular interest to the younger members. Any comments?

Track Plans

"I am desperately looking for track plans of some old South African Railway stations. In particular Sir Lowrys Pass when it was a terminus (circa 1890), Protem and Klipdale.

I hope that you can point me in the right direction as this type of information is virtually impossible to get. I know you can use Google Earth, but I need more detailed information.

Thanking you in advance - E-mail: randall.n1@telkomsa.net"

Marketing Steam - Let's look at the Cruise Ship Market

There is a healthy debate on a comparison between Rail Tourism and the huge Ocean Cruise market.

To read the dialogue click here.

Preserving Locomotives - An Exchange between Members

-----Original Message-----
From: Lee Gates [mailto:LeeG@leaf.co.za]
Sent: 10 May 2009 14:47
To: Dennis & Anne MITCHELL; Andy Selfe; Joannewest@btinternet.com; LeeG@leaf.co.za.; momsmith@lantic.net; elize@reefsteamers.co.za
Subject: RE: LOCOMOTIVES IN STORAGE

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen....

I have no doubt that black oiling works to prevent rust. I suppose if tying to weld to oil impregnated steelwork would require burning the stuff off with a torch. The labour and transport of the oil would be the biggest issue making this not a free exercise.

However, it could be a good challenge by SIA to members in proximity to the threatened locos to take them under their wing and report back to SIA.

Question - has this been found to work better with or without boiler jacketing intact?

As to scrapper repellent, one could ward off the darker skinned variety by placing some muti prominently on the buffer beams and within the cabs. Perhaps a random concoction of some red mud, a few knucklebones and feathers, a bead or two, a piece of very dry biltong and some dried out Fish eggs. Would make any superstitious native run screaming for the hills!

Jokes aside, I think it would be worthwhile at least black oiling the coastal locos and as they are a bit out of the way, hang the Environmental issues.

Lee

From: Dennis & Anne MITCHELL [mailto:dampjaack@bigpond.com]
Sent: 09 May 2009 12:36 AM
To: Andy Selfe; Joannewest@btinternet.com; LeeG@leaf.co.za.; momsmith@lantic.net; elize@reefsteamers.co.za
Subject: Re: LOCOMOTIVES IN STORAGE

Dear Andy,

Many thanks for your reply, you are thinking along the same lines that I am. Not only does the oil protect the locos, it does make a loco unpopular for cutting and /or hacking "bits" off. Not only that, but we found that when you need to bring the loco back into service; after about half an hour of putrid smell, as the boiler heats up; there is no bad smell that lingers it just smells like a steam loco should BEAUTIFUL!!

If the loco has been blackoiled very recently, you may have to scrape off the excess with a paint scraper; but it permeates into the metal quickly, but burns off really quickly as well.

A word of warning, it is horrible messy stuff, and stinks, but it DOES protect and preserve ,without side effects.

Lee Gates wrote that there may be a problem with the ROSE FOUNDATION who apparently collect the oil from the motor garages; but I think if the situation was put to them in such a way that they could get promotion for "doing their" bit" to help steam preservation, that they would come to the party. Also, I would guess that SANDSTONE ESTATES would have a fair bit of used sump oil to throw out with all their antique tractors, traction engines etc. that, provided a way of transporting the oil to the locos ,which I know are a long way from the free state, could be worked out ; maybe a break in run for an International or such like [killing two birds with one stone].

The other thing that is on my heart is: do you chaps FROLIME the boilers of stored locos to stop the rust getting into the cavernos like volume of the boiler shell? We found that also at least slowed down the preservationists worst enemy, RUST.!!

All for now thanks for your comments.
HAPPY STEAMING
Dennis

Andy Selfe wrote:
Hello Dennis,

Your great idea has an interesting side effect which has just struck me..... Imagine after several dousings of old oil, how unpopular these locos would be with the cutting crews? I know they work at long arms' length with their torches, but I know from personal experience how difficult it is to even see what your're doing when you try to heat / cut oil impregnated steel!

So let's pour it on, and into all the nooks and crannies!

Regards
Andy

-----Original Message-----
From: Dennis & Anne MITCHELL [mailto:dampjaack@bigpond.com]
Sent: 03 May 2009 15:42
To: Joannewest@btinternet.com; momsmith@lantic.net;
Ian@atlanticrail.co.za;
rtaylor1@xsinet.co.za
Subject: LOCOMOTIVES IN STORAGE

Dear Steam -in -action advisory members,

This is an open letter to all of the advisory board; My name is Dennis Mitchell and I have been an S.I.A. member for about 12 months.

Living in Australia sometimes makes it difficult to see the "whole picture" and I just have a couple of suggestions.

1}Regarding locomotives that are 'in limbo"; In Australia when steam finished fledgling groups were set up to try and run tourist railways quite often without covered areas to stable locos. Locomotives that were not likely to be restored immediately were covered liberally in black oil- i.e. used sump oil that garages were only too happy to dispose of as it was a headache for them.

It was found that if locos were covered in the stuff every 6 weeks or so, after about a year; it permeated into the frames, boiler etc and stopped any further rusting of these valuable assets. It is horrible messy stuff , but we found after a few liberal coatings; you could just walk along the top of the boiler with a 25-30 litre drum and slowly tip it you wouldn't get too filthy.

My question is this- is it possible to coat the locos stored near the ocean- Humewood road, Port Shepstone; Paarden Eiland [or wherever the Cape Town locos are kept] in this stuff to stop the sea air and resultant rust from turning these treasures into rust? Surely if contacted correctly some garages could help; also I would presume Sandstone Estates would have a lot of used sump oil to get rid of every month.

The locos at DORRIGO have stood in the open for 35-+ years; firstly at Newcastle near to the ocean, and now in a rainforest area, and they have very little rust.[The blackoil I think would also be a deterrent to the scrap thieves as well?]

2] Would TRANSNET allow accessibility to allow this to happen? It makes my heart bleed to see such majestic locos being pulled apart like so much junk!!

Hopefully the corporate "think tanks can nut it all out, peace will reign and all will be well. Please don't take my suggestions as criticism YOU ARE ALL WORKING SO WELL UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

Hope I've provided food for thought'
HAPPY STEAMING
Dennis"

Dal Josephat

From: Johan Janse van Rensburg [mailto:bvo@webafrica.org.za]
Sent: 11 May 2009 21:18
To: joannewest@btinternet.com
Subject: Dal Josephat - Autoforwarded from iBuilder

"Hi there,

Other than my `E` mail address I am known as Johan in normal times, what I would like to know is what happened to the lovely machines at Dal Josephat, The Red Devil and Maryna is among the loco`s that was there.

I fired Maryna for some time before I left the then S.A.R. & H. and I discovered them there about three years ago, Can you tell me if they are also on the danger list.

Hope to hear from you soon,
J.H.J.van Rensburg"

Millsite

From: Andrew Johnson [mailto:AndrewJ@shaftsinkers.co.za]
Sent: 12 May 2009 09:02
To: joannewest@btinternet.com
Subject: steam in Africa

I read the article as to equipment & locomotives which are left at Millsite.

However nothing was mentioned about wagons & coaches. One particular coach in mind is what I call the Preachers coach, It is unique in that it is probably the only short coach, which runs on both a W iron and a coach bogie.

There are also a number of short wagons which are also could have clams to being the only ones of there type to be left.

I would also like to bring to your attention to a couple of 4'8" short mine wagons abandoned just north and quite close to the SANRASM (on mine property).

Unfortunately I don't have any photographs of the wagons and coach at the moment however if I could still get them.

Regards,
Andrew Johnson"

SIA COMMENT

An easy one to answer, all history! Spoornet/HRASA allowed the grass to grow unchecked at the storage area at Millsite. About three winters ago, the grass caught alight and set all the coaches alight as well. Nothing remained but a few twisted frames, which were eventually cut up.

The SANRASM ones met the same fate, although still on REGM"s property at the time.

Andrew Johnson, an active SIA member, has also sent us photos of some old mine wagons.

"From: Andrew Johnson [mailto:AndrewJ@shaftsinkers.co.za]
Sent: 13 May 2009 07:23
To: joannewest@btinternet.com

As per my email yesterday I am sending some pictures of one of the short wagons which seem to be abandoned just outside north site of SANRASM
.
Could someone shed some light as to why these wagons are there and are the 4'8" gauge?

Regards
Andrew Johnson"

SIA COMMENT

SIA is investigating the status of these together with ownership with a view to putting together their rescue programme.









Links

Every month we receive ever more fascinating web site links which contain historical information on key aspects of South Africa's Steam History. Rob Fisher has a photopic site which can be accessed under the following links:

http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183820.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183832.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58184615.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183839.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/c1099919.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183835.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183844.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183842.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/p58183847.html
http://ronfisher.fotopic.net/c1306177.html

Other useful links:

http://aidan533.fotopic.net/

Advisory Board Members

For the record, your Advisory Board Members are as follows:

Andy Selfe (aselfe@mweb.co.za)
Oscar Sabatini (osabatini@mweb.co.za)
Lee Gates (leeg@leaf.co.za)
Pat Ackerman (sar3324@mtnloaded.co.za)
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Ian Pretorius (ian@atlanticrail.co.za)
Mike Myers (mikem@sandstone.co.za)
Phil Mortimer Jnr. (imortim1@jhu.edu)
Wilfred Mole (joannewest@btinternet.com)

Steam in Action Information

OUR FOUNDING MEMBERS:

Reefsteamers: www.reefsteamers.co.za
Friends of the Rail: www.friendsoftherail.com
Sandstone Heritage Trust: www.sandstone-estates.com

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

Your comments, queries and suggestions are always welcome! Please email: joannewest@btinternet.com

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